

✓
COTTAGE-PICTURES;

OR,

✓
THE POOR:

A POEM,

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

By Mr. PRATT,

AUTHOR OF SYMPATHY, GLEANINGS,

HARVEST-HOME, &c.

FOURTH EDITION,

WITH FIVE ENGRAVINGS, BY CARDON, AFTER THE DRAWINGS OF
DE LOUTHERBOURG.

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TO THE
EARL OF WARWICK.

MY LORD,

IN addition, and, will you permit me to say, in *precedency* of your other distinctions, though these are many and illustrious, I have availed myself of the opportunity given me in some remarks on Warwickshire, just published in "HARVEST-HOME," to expatiate on your Lordship's claims to the title of PATRON and FRIEND of the POOR.

And now that I am about to add the strength and beauty of some illustrative Engravings, from the Drawings of a Master, I intreat you will accept of them, and of the Work which they will adorn, as a sincere tribute of the respect and consideration, with which

I have the honor to be,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most devoted and obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, January 10th, 1805.

CRITIQUES ON THE POEM.

“ It may be said that the author has made the *Poor* a *rich* and interesting subject, in its relation to the pressure of the times—he displays some beautiful thoughts, and happy strokes of the poetic pencil, and opens a wide field for philosophical and political discussion; and, if he can thus induce the rich and powerful to bestow on it all the attention which it *imperiously demands*, he will be classed among the contributors to the public weal.—The work is conceived with boldness and executed with spirit.”—*Monthly Review*, March, 1802.

“ The work before us is written from the impulse of pure benevolence; and the author has been animated by a laudable indignation against *every* evil, that seem to have resulted from the spirit of MONOPOLY, and has painted in rich, varied, and affecting colours, the merits and miseries of rustic simplicity—he gives in truth “the simple annals of the POOR, in such a manner as strongly to interest the feelings, while it engages the imagination.”—*Anti-Jacobin Review for March*, 1802.

“ The author of this Poem has felt for the miseries of the Poor, and expressed good feelings on an important topic, in a well-timed season; his advice is always humane and generally judicious.—The author’s “SYMPATHY” has had many admirers; and they who have been gratified by that work, will certainly derive equal pleasure from the present performance.”—*Critical Review for January*, 1802.

“ In the present publication the author embraces objects of the greatest importance; and the Poem is not more estimable for its design than execution.—The Notes and Illustrations are highly interesting: they contain many authentic anecdotes, and recommend much practical improvement in the comforts of cottagers.”—*Supplement to the Gentleman’s Magazine for December*, 1801.

• “ With great benevolence, and with the ornament of numbers, the poet here defends the rights of the Poor; the work will give pleasure to the philanthropist where the politician may not altogether concur in opinion; and which the poetical reader, whether philanthropist or politician, will applaud.”—*European Magazine for January*, 1802.

“ The benevolence of the design of this Poem would sanction an inferior effort of the Muse; but the author’s poetry does not stand in need of this prejudice, however amiable, to support it. The plan is most happily chosen.—In many places we find much of the harmony of Goldsmith’s versification, with a fancy peculiarly the author’s own.—In other parts, we perceive that generous indignation hurled against oppressors of every description, expressed in appropriate numbers, which evidently flowed from the writer’s heart, and has reached ours.”—*Monthly Mirror for December*, 1801.

☞ The "COTTAGE-PICTURES" having now passed the ordeal of professional criticism, the Author hopes he may be permitted to adjoin the testimonies of private friendship; which, when proceeding from such authorities, will be received as confirmations of the public sanction, and warrant him in thus avowing his love of honourable fame.

TO THE AUTHOR.

OFT have the splendid offerings of the Nine
With adulation heaped Ambition's shrine;
Oft have they hung their laurels round her ear,
And hymn'd her progress through the paths of war;
But, seldom have their votaries turn'd the eye,
Where the pale Sons of Want and Sorrow lie;
Or taught the ear-fastidious to endure
"The short and simple Annals of the Poor;"
Yet to the Poor the voice reveal'd of Heaven
Has from on high peculiar blessings given;
Then while the Bard, humane, (whose tuneful lay
Now brings their humble virtues into day),
Bids Wealth to Poverty its succour lend,
Proud of that noblest name *the Poor Man's Friend*.
Responsive to his notes the angelic train
Join with their golden harps the kindred strain.

H. J. PYE, POET-LAUREAT.

TO THE AUTHOR.

SAY, shall thine Erato, at this pale hour,
When wide the obstreperous trumpet speeds dismay;
Say, shall thine Erato the music pour,
That melts the soul to love, at closing day?
Shall soft Benevolence yet lingering stray
Where Cottage-Innocence and calm Content
Deck with fair wreathes the virgin's bashful brow!
Ah! will the dissonance of arms allow
One little pause for rural merriment,
One little pause for PRATT's melodious muse?
Dull is the hostile ear to warbling shades!
Thy every picture that could erst diffuse
A fairy-light o'er lawns and quiet glades,
Of War's terrific waste a livelier sense renews.

R. POLWHELE.*

* This is the last of three beautiful Sonnets, by the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, the one in 1765, on reading "Landscapes in Verse;" the other in 1803; and the Sonnet, here given for the first time, at the close of the latter mentioned year, on reading "Cottage-Pictures," then entitled "The Poor."

Ad S. J. PRATT, et mihi et Musis amicum, ob Pœma ejus elegantissimum, cui
nomen, "THE POOR."

DELICIE nostræ, Goldsmith rediturus in astra,
Hæredem, dixit, "te mihi, Pratte, volo:
En! tibi lapsa cadit divino jure pœtæ
Vestis sacra; sacri muneris esto memor."
Risit pauperies, risère jacentia rura,
Nam simul humanæ cognita fila lyræ
Est redivivus, inops exclamat Rusticus, alter
Goldsmith jam nostro dulce dolere dolet.

J. MORFITT.

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE, BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

To S. J. PRATT, to me and to the Muses dear, on Account of his most elegant
Poem, intituled, "THE POOR."

WHEN much-lov'd Goldsmith sought the skies,
"Be thou my Heir, beloved Pratt," he cries;
"Take this poetic mantle—lo! 'tis thine,
"Congenial Poet, by a Right Divine."—
He spoke, and Penury forgot its pains,
A gleam of gladness cheer'd the drooping plains.
Soon as he heard the renovated Lyre,
By Pity strung, exclaims a rustic, Sire,
"He lives—he lives—our Goldsmith lives again,
Sweetly to wail our woes in his immortal strain.

J. M.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE POEM ON "THE POOR."

COMPASSION, wandering on fair Albion's shore,
Threw her soft eye-beams o'er Britannia's POOR;
Where hopeless Industry still met her view,
And the chilled hearth no gleam of comfort knew:
Then pour'd her wishes, that some Angel-Muse,
From her own fane, the generous theme would chuse.
"And is there none," she cried, "no Son of Fame,
"Will grace, in numbers, humble Misery's claim,
"For suffering Rustics, breathe the pensive song,
"And mark, in Poesy, the Peasant's Wrong?"

"Thy prayer is heard," (exulting Genius cried,
 His bright wand waving as the goddess sigh'd,
 "Oh! there is one on whom my quenchless rays
 "Lend their pure fire, to animate his lays;
 "The Bard of "Sympathy," with soul benign,
 "Shall touch with magic force the lyre divine,
 "To Village-Sorrows lead Attention's eye,
 "And waft to Pleasure's doom the Poor Man's Sigh.
 "Mercy shall seek the haunts his strains deplore,
 "And Pity hail him—" *Poet of the Poor.*"

SIBYLLA.*

 TO THE AUTHOR.†

Written immediately after reading "COTTAGE-PICTURES."

AS the last murmurs of thy plaintive lyre
 Thrill'd on my ear, I ask'd what gentle Muse
 Such strains of generous pity could inspire,
 Such notes of sweet philanthropy infuse?

It is not she that breathes the loud record
 Of martial madness and the haughty brave,—
 The wide-spread havocks of the wasting sword,
 Close leagued with death and caterer for the grave.

More than Parnassian flowers she strews around,
 But not from Old Parnassus' hill is she:
 She comes from Oliver's own sacred ground,
 And her true name is Heavenly CHARITY.

J. BULLAR, JUN.

 TO THE AUTHOR, ON HIS POEM OF "THE POOR," &c.

HAIL'D be thy Muse! for, O whene'er she sings,
 Compassion's angel seems to tune the strings,

* A near and dear female relative, author of many beautiful Poems in the fifth volume of *Gleanings in England*, and in the third volume of *Harvest-Home*.

† The following honourable testimony is added to the present edition, from the truly virtuous and ingenious correspondent, to whom I am so much indebted for many effusions, both in prose and verse, in the *Harvest-Home*.

Around the chords, the sweet inspirers throng,
 And to Humanity the notes belong.
 A social sense the thrilling sounds impart,
 And while it moves our nature mends our heart,
 The generous heart—but for those breasts of steel,
 Like shaggy rocks “unknowing how to feel,”
 For those who aggravate the Poor Man’s lot,
 And rend the last scant comfort from his cot;
 Spurn him though prostrate, from gorg’d Plenty’s gate,
 Break from his grasp, and leave him to his fate—
 Ah! what can melting lays with these avail?
 What Pity’s plea, or Sorrow’s tender tale?

To gentle beings gentle means may prove .
 The rights of sympathy, the claims of love;
 Verse such as thine, from them may draw the tear,
 Stir the warm blood, and heave the sigh sincere;
 For them the Muse has but to paint a woe
 To make their bounty, like their eyes, o’erflow;
 But sterner Natures—such as grind the Poor,
 And drive “imploring Famine” from the door;
 The harsh, the harden’d—other powers require,
 Than sounds harmonious from the sacred lyre;
 A thousand harps, by choirs of angels strung,
 And notes divine, by raptur’d seraphs sung,
 Reach not the breast by demon Avarice sway’d;
 For them the vice-correcting *Laws* were made;
 Justice for them must in her terrors arm,
 Their interests threaten, and their fears alarm.
 The niggard boon, which scoffing they refuse
 To weeping Mercy and the wailing Muse;
 Law may extort; they yield, but ne’er bestow;
 They crouch to Justice, but they mock at Woe.

Yet still proceed, blest Poet of the Poor!
 Congenial spirits shall applaud thy lore;
 Taught by thy Muse where the pale victims lie,
 The good shall feel the touch of Charity,
 And haply those who in gay mansions dwell,
 Led by thy lay, shall visit Sorrow’s cell.

P R E F A C E.

IT is the remark of a very benevolent character, that, "the interests of the poorer classes of society, are so interwoven with those of every part of the community, that there is no subject more deserving of general attention, nor any knowledge more entitled to the exalted name of science, than that in which their well-being is concerned; than that, the tendency of which is to carry domestic comfort into the recesses of every cottage, and to add to the virtue and morality of a nation, by increasing its happiness."

The noblest and most elevated employments of the human mind, indeed, lose their importance, when placed in competition with researches, on which the welfare and good conduct of millions may depend; and the result whereof may add as much to national prosperity as to individual benefit.

A sudden revolution, the most dire, perhaps, of any in this revolutionary age, has taken place in the state of the Poor.—Progressive improvements have been made in agriculture; the benefits of which are almost entirely lost to the most numerous and useful part of the community; while individuals only have been enriched. The poor-rates have, in the mean time, increased, to the dissatisfaction of the rich, and nearly to the ruin of the middle classes; while the wants and miseries of the peasantry, with some few exceptions, which will be particularized, have accumulated in the proportion that plans have been formed for their relief. This argues a very wrong policy and management somewhere.—In the midst of a long and afflictive illness, the Author has spared no pains to trace the effects of this deep national grievance to its sources: and he is told, by those, who, by their situation and circumstances, are allowed to

P R E F A C E.

be most competent to the subject, that he has so done in the following pages, in which, however, there is no one passage founded upon a fiction; of course the Poem is excluded from one of the grand privileges of poetry.

Yet, in lieu of this, the Author is but too strong in **FACTS**. He has taken the country for the last and present summers, in almost every direction of the island, as well for the purposes of health as of investigation. According to his usual habits of travel, he has entered the field, the farm, and the cottage; not hastily, but to pause, to enquire, and to contemplate the general plenty of the one, and the general poverty of the other. He has sat himself down amongst the peasantry, not to augment their sufferings, nor to foment their discords, but to discover, by diligent research and silent reflection, what could be the **CAUSES**, and what were the real **EFFECTS** of **FAMINE** in the land.

A few summers preceding these excursions, it came within the author's correspondence with a foreigner of distinction, to detail, with truth and with delight, the results of a journey* which exhibited many of the most interesting views that could enter the human eye, or fill the human heart—the cheerful countenances, healthful forms, and gladsome labours of a *happy* peasantry. It was his duty and his pleasure to follow their homeward steps, from the farm and fields, to cottages where Content was not simply a guest but a resident; and he felt what he expressed—that most of the potentates of the other parts of Europe would, for such cottages, willingly have exchanged their palaces. At the same time he did not fail to congratulate the *then* less ambitious tenantry, on that general plenty which a close inspection of their granaries and barns, loaded to the roof, had offered to his view.

To describe the causes and effects of so sudden, and deplorable a change, is the endeavour of the work now presented to the reader: its publication has been impeded by local circumstances, and by some relapses of an illness, which had been deemed dangerous—but with respect to the public calamity, no part of the subject is anticipated by the delay—save the *prospect* of *comparative* relief for the approaching winter—a prospect, over which, the various authors of the evil are labouring even at this moment to throw clouds and darkness.

But, that the objects of the poem may not be impeded by a length of prefatory matter, or the reader checked in the progress of perusal, the author reserves what may be further necessary in the way of remark or illustration on those objects, to the **NOTES**, which will be found at the end of the work, agreeable to the references.

* Gleanings in England, vols. 1. 2.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PEA**C**E was announced at the place where the Author was making a pause, in Warwickshire, just as he had penned the following lines—

“ When PEACE shall spread her conquests o’er the land,
And wash the blood-spots from Britannia’s hand;
When youth and age shall swell the tidings round,
And nought but Peace and Plenty’s horn resound.”

In common with his countrymen, he felt the joyful intelligence at his heart. It produced a glow which annihilated the sense of personal suffering; and if the figure be not too bold, the feeling would bear him out, in calling it a moment of immortality in mortal life.

Yet, so broad, deep, and general are the mischiefs to town and country, enumerated in the subsequent Poem, that even this blessed event, will be insufficient to compass the prosperity of the island, and to produce what, nationally or individually, is always of the greatest importance—PEACE AT HOME—unless the system of domestic MONOPOLY be vigorously restrained—a system which has been going on, in wicked progression, from bad to worse, till terms are at length wanting to express its corruption or its complexity.

When this many-headed monster with the hydras in its train, shall be under controul, and not till then—when ruined cottages shall be rebuilt, and agriculture encouraged as the first object of industry; the empire—horrible as has been the devastation, incredible as has been the destruction of the human species—may begin to breathe. We may then hope to see credit regained, our strength replenished, our population increased, the arts prevented from taking wing, the exhausted remnants of the land gain time and energy to recover, exertions keep pace with encouragements, and the song of comfort and content be once more heard from the ploughshare and the loom.

In a word, thus may the country be renewed; thus boast again the name and vigour of good Old England. But, if the corrupt principle that set on foot the corn-conspiracy be not changed; if the system of diversified monopoly, above mentioned, with all that forms the hideous chain of rapacity and fraud, be not broken link by link—even the grand desideratum of exhausted nations and of harrassed nature—PEACE itself—must be inadequate to private happiness and public honour.

ARGUMENT.

PART FIRST.

Opening of the Subject—Invocation to the Spirits of Pity and Sympathy—Tribute to England—Views of the State of the Cottage Poor, previous to the Causes of their Decay—Their Labours, Sports, Health, Happiness, Loves, Marriages, Progeny—Views of the Peasantry of the Country at the present time.

PART SECOND.

Distress of the Middle Classes of Mankind not less general or afflictive—The fate of Gentlemen reduced—Illustrated in the Account of LUCIUS and his Family—The terms Poor and Rich examined—Appeal to Authority—Enquiry into the CAUSES of the Public Grievances—EFFECTS—Origin of Wealth—Picture of a Farmer and his family in Days of Simplicity—Companion to this Picture, in a Portrait of Days of Refinement—Farmer-Gentlemen—Farmer-Ladies—Ton and Trade Days—Monopolists—Jobbers—Dealers—Regraters—Bakers—Badgers—Mealmen—Middlemen—Speculators, and other Corn Conspirators—Their Labours and Rewards—Country Banks and Bankers—A Petty-Farmer of the present Day, and the Misery of his Family from the anticipated Sale of his Crop on the Ground.

PART THIRD.

Examination of REMEDIES—Address to Persons in Power—The System of *Compulsion* in usage for the two last Centuries, as to the Poor, considered and exploded—Importance of the POOR—Origin, progress, and dignity of the first Cottagers—The relative Rights of Men—The independency and feeling of all Good Men in all Situations—Public Workhouses—Proper and improper Objects of such Charities—A survey of the Country and its Productions, immediately preceding the Harvest of the present Year—Personification of the Earth, as the common Parent addressing her Children—Warnings to Landholders—Terrors of Hunger—A War for Bread—Incentive to Fellow-Feeling; the grand Specific for the present Disease—The good Effects of Kindness upon Industry, exemplified—The Widow of Hasketon and her fourteen Children—A System of Kindness to the Poor recommended—Address to Landlords and to several distinguished Friends of the POOR—Persuasive to follow their Example—Conclusion—Address to the Deity.

BREAD.

PART I.

SPIRITS of **PITY** ! whereso'er ye dwell,
With sunbeams crown'd, or thron'd in hearts, that feel
The spark sublime, by heav'n's own lustre fed,
With brighter glories than e'er sunbeams shed ;
Thy spark, divine **BENEVOLENCE** ! whose ray
Quenches the orb of summer's proudest day ;
O with unwonted powers assist my song,
Tune your own harps, to you the notes belong.
I sing the **POOR** ! for them invite the lyre,
For them alone I ask the poet's fire ;
For them, at hours forbade to touch the string,
Late from the grave escap'd, I yearn to sing.

And thou blest muse of SYMPATHY ! again,
Inspire and patronize a kindred strain.
No idle plumage pluck'd from fancy's wing,
No playful bubbles from the fabled spring,
Thy bard now seeks. Ah no ! far other themes
Than verdant meads, or fiction's fairy dreams,
Now prompt the numbers : TRUTHS, that may impart
A touch of mercy to the hardest heart ;
Teach avarice to feel the social sigh,
And bathe his cheek in dews of charity ;
Such dews, as falling on compassion's shrine,
Gush from the smitten rock in drops divine :
The cause your own then, ev'ry muse attend,
For every muse should be the poor man's friend.

O ENGLAND ! earth, more dear than all beside,
Whose matchless bounties, with a filial pride,
My eager voice has told with raptur'd tongue,
My pen has painted, and my muse has sung,
And fondly tried their fervors to impart,
Feebly, perchance, but with a willing heart,
With rapture dwelt on all thy deeds of arms,
And with a lover's passion own'd thy charms :

Thy fruitful fields, that open'd on the view
Soft scenes of beauty and of comfort too;
Thy fertile hills, and wide-extended plains,
That us'd to exercise and cheer the swains;
Their wholesome labour, bed and food supply,
And yield to wealth a fair sufficiency;
Thy forests, deep and vast, whose dark-green robe
Encanopy the oaks that awe the globe,
Those oaks, to which old ocean bows the knee,
And with that globe thy foe still keep thee free;
Thy commerce too, that from each alien shore
Wafts to thine own a never-failing store:
And O the crown of all, the central ray
That o'er thy laurels spreads effulgent day,
Thy gracious charities, whose splendid glow,
Gilds an immortal wreath to deck thy brow;—
All these, full oft, have rais'd the plausive strain,
These still are thine—but ah! bestowed in vain.

I sing the Poor! *thy* poor my native land,
E'erwhile, and not remote, a blithsome band,
A ruddy, reckless, merry-hearted crew,
Fresh as their herbage wash'd in morning dew,

Light, buoyant, airy, as their upland gales,
Firm as their hills, and teeming as their vales :
Their lambs less gamefome, when day-labour done,
They fought the fhade, or frolick'd, where the fun
Threw his laft beams on flower-wreath'd cafements fmall,
Gilt the young leaves, or play'd on cottages wall ;
Less gay the birds that carol'd o'er their heads,
Built in their bowers, or nested round their fheds.

All day they toil'd ; at eve new labours preft,
For then their little garden grounds were drest ;
Scanty and narrow fcraps of earth 'tis true,
Yet there their comforts, there their treasures grew :
The white rofe and the red, and pink fo fweet,
Herbs for each day, and fruit for fabbath treat :
The currant bush, and goofeberry fo fine,
Affording fummer fruit, and winter wine ;
The cooling apple too, and grateful pear,
And pea, for beauty and for ufe, were there ;
And formal box, and bloomy thrift were feen,
Bord'ring the flow'r-bed and the path-way green ;
And elder flowers, to make fair maids more fair,
The glossy berry, fill the matron's care,

In dark drear nights to give, when spirits fail,
A chearful drop to thaw the gossip's tale,
When ghosts have ic'd the blood of youth and age,
Who, with a thousand goblins would engage,
And boldly bid them stalk from where they lurk,
When once the charmed cup begins to work;
'Till those, who had aver'd the flame glar'd blue,
Close huddled round it, as the terrors grew,
Wish'd, that some sneaking spectre dar'd appear,
And on each other flung the coward's fear.

Beside their garden, dwelt their living stock,
The petted lambkin from the smiling flock,
The peasant youngling's joy to see its race,
Its antic gambols, or its sauntring pace,
Or mount its back, or smooth its woolly coat,
Or twine a garland round its fleecy throat,
Or pat its visage fair, that seem'd so mild,
Tho', in the frolick mood, so archly wild,
That oft, the fulky dog, and cat demure,
Betray'd to romps, have fall'n into the lure.

The rich man's pastimes, are the poor man's wealth,
And yield him plenty, happiness, and health,
The fattening porket, and prolific sow,
The brooding hen, and balmy-breathing cow,
The proud, vain turkey, tyrant of the green,
The good old market mare, and sheep serene ;
These fill'd the home-stall spare, with life and glee,
These gave enough—enough's prosperity !
These rais'd the hind, and lifted him to man,
And these were his, till traitors chang'd the plan,
Their country's traitors ! who with dire design——
But check awhile, my heart, th' indignant line.

Ah lead me back, ye muses, to the bower,
Just as the swain, return'd at evening hour,
Felt the soft dew descending on his head,
When twilight's mantle o'er his cot was spread :
And tho' perchance, soft mists obscur'd the place,
The home-way path, the rustic's heart could trace,
Clear thro' a thousand vapours of the night,
Affection saw it, and still view'd it bright,
A leading star it glow'd within his breast,
Shone on his hearth, and beam'd upon his rest.

Then was the poor man rich, and fondly smil'd,
As in the varied forms of wife and child,
His cultur'd orchard, and his little field,
His tenfold joys, and treasures, were reveal'd.
The day shut in, he own'd a lord no more,
Freedom began, and servitude was o'er;
At night enfranchis'd, he resum'd his throne,
And reign'd o'er hearts as happy as his own;
There sat the harmless monarch of his shed,
Peace crown'd his slumbers, and love blest his bed,
And tho', at morn's return, no monarch he,
Awhile laid by his little sov'reignty,
Again at early eve he gently sway'd,
Alternate rul'd, was govern'd and obey'd.

And when a neighbour chanc'd to wend that way,
What time the sunset clos'd the cares of day,
Or sweet-heart guest, to woo the damsel fair,
How blithe with such the cottage meal to share!
No sence of morn or noon-tide toils remain,
But pleasure beats renew'd in every vein!
Round goes the home-brew'd, with the light regale,
And mirthful thoughts, and artless jests prevail,

The peasant fire, and matron, as they quaff
Good luck to lovers, mingle many a laugh,
With winks and nods the bashful maid to cheer,
While the flush'd youth in whispers wins her ear;
And as the time to bid farewell drew nigh,
The pitying father heard the lover's sigh,
And at the warning click to strike, he strove
With generous haste the hour-hand back to move,
And still the tender respite to prolong,
The matron kind would claim the maiden's song;
And still, in fond return, the grateful swain,
Would pour his passion in some artless strain,
Some soothing ditty that might hope inspire,
Or, in his turn, might call upon the fire,
Who in his age, rememb'ring days of youth,
Would troll his ballad fill'd with love and truth,
That very ballad which declar'd his flame,
When to the matron *he* a wooing came;
She, pleas'd to hear the recollected lay,
Prolong'd the parting hour by fresh delay,
Trill'd her own madrigal with joyous sound,
'Till all the cottage took the chorus round,

At length, with promise of returning soon,
The swain hied home beneath the fav'ring moon.

And, when the FAIR return'd, how blithe to see,
This from the plough, and that the wheel set free ;
To hear how echo sent the mingled sound,
O'er hill and vale, to woods and streams around.
Lo, in gay groups the harmless people go,
Prepar'd for every prank and every shew ;
All up betimes, and like the morning drest,
In nature's vermeil robe and lillied vest.
How sweet for early passenger to trace,
Th' anticipated day in every face !
In every honest countenance reveal'd,
To read, whate'er the light-wing'd hours might yield ;
The hallow'd keep-sake, ever-sacred thing !
The motto'd garter, and the posied ring ;
The bloomy ribbon, and the bonnet gay,
And hose, with figur'd clock, for holy day ;
The father's duffel stout, and matron's gown
Of goodly grey, or sober-seeming brown ;
The jovial feasting, and the foaming ale,
The loud-sung roundelay, the merry tale ;

The feats of merryman, the furious strife,
Warning, I ween, to maids ! of punch and wife !
The bridal day pronounc'd, the banns arrang'd,
The vow repeated, and the kifs exchange'd ;
Then to their cots, unmindful of the dews,
Pockets with fairings, and heads cramm'd with news,
For kin-folk dear at home, who pining there
Haply sit up to hear about the fair !
And then for grandfire old, and granny grey,
Came forth the soft memorials of the day ;
The polish'd snuff-box, with its pungent store,
The sweetmeats rare, and bravely gilded o'er ;
While those too young, like those too old to rove,
Receive their tokens of remember'd love ;
The shrilly whistle, and more manly toy,
For the weak infant, and the sturdy boy,
These, lightly slumbr'ing, or their little eyes
By hope unclos'd, beheld, with glad surprize
Those tokens gay, and half asleep, would take,
The luscious lozenge, or the tempting cake,
The orange sweet, or golden gingerbread,
And strew with many a crumb the tiny bed :

Small gifts! yet ah, how priz'd! and brought to view,
As treasures promis'd, and expected too!
For still from youth to nature's latest hour,
The LITTLE CARES* preserve their magic power.

So stole the time in rural happiness,
When love and pleasure lur'd to soft excess;
Ah, trespass rare, by tenfold labours bought,
A passing fun-beam in a tempest caught:
The fleeting jubilee of one brief day,
On which the peasant loos'd his soul to play;
On which, the long-revolving months to cheer,
He felt the pause that soften'd all his year.

Yes, those were times when peasants could afford
The blest *division* of the social board;
Those were the days when men might work and live,
And the kind amities receive and give;
Friend, neighbour, lover, were by turns carefs'd,
And rural comfort was the poor man's guest.
O days of soft content, so late our own!
O times of rapture! whither are ye flown?

* *Petit Soins.*

Thrice-happy Abbot! (*a*) aid me to relate,
In faithful numbers, *thy* distinguish'd state;
The varied charm, and treasures spread around
Thy blissful cottage, and thy rood of ground,
Thy three-fold hives of honey-making bees,
Thy single quickset, and thy fruitful trees,
Thy thrifty housewife, and her duteous train,
And all the blessings of thy small domain.

Illustrious swain! 'twas thine, from youth to age,
In hard, yet wholesome labour to engage;
With spirit steady, and with patient hand,
To raise an Eden on a nook of land,
A flowery nook, with nature's bounty grac'd,
Meed of thy toil, and rescued from the waste;
For half a century 'twas thine to prove,
O strange to tell! the joys of wedded love,
And faith sincere, and social happiness,
And children good, thy silver hairs to bless.

Hail, venerable cottager! and, hail,
Thy labour-cheering draughts of vigorous ale;

Hail too, the secret cause of all thy wealth,
 The constant toil that brought thee constant health;
 Thrice hail thy speck of earth, so sweet to thought,
 By a long life of honest labour bought;
 And yet more sweet the liberty, that gave
 Thy soul its peace, and made thee spurn the slave.

And FAIRFAX (*b*) hail to thee, whose gen'rous mind,
 At little cost, thus rais'd th' industrious hind.
 Ah were the rich, like thee, their aid to lend,
 The weak to strengthen, and the poor befriend,
 Like thy own swain the peasantry might live,
 And liberal share the comforts which they give;
 Like him, his cot might build, his garden dress,
 His patron honour, and his offspring bless;
 Like him, might look with pride on his retreat,
 And the hut flourish near the rich man's gate.

Ye, who by random chance of birth are great,
 Favourites of fortune, denizens of fate,
 Who lavish thousands to adorn a PLACE,
 And ask a REPTON's aid to give it grace;

Say, can your idle vista, pigmy dome,
 That ape the pageantries of Greece and Rome,
 So fair an object to the view display,
 As one small tenement of white-wash'd clay,
 Which, if the simple group it shields are blest,
 Shall rear a temple in each grateful breast?
 And ah! what ornament on earth can vie,
 Or bring such pictures to the gladden'd eye,
 As wholesome cots, by happy beings fill'd;
 As a small speck by happy beings till'd!
 Blest who like thee, O CARRINGTON, (c) afford,
 The plots that make the peasant *love* their lord.

NOT SUCH I SING! ah, no! a different race,
 Grief at their hearts, and famine in their face;
 A meagre, lifeless, melancholy clan,
 Robb'd of each right that God bestows on man;
 Of every shrub despoil'd, and every flower,
 The wretched paupers of the PRESENT HOUR!

No petted lamb is theirs to sport around,
 No fruitful orchard, and no smiling ground;

Nor balmy-breathing cow, nor swine appear,
Nor profitable poultry, clucking near;
Nor e'en the family musician sweet,
Who gives the cottager a tuneful treat
All the long year, tho' oft his noiseless song
Is lost; amidst the summer's blended throng,
Domestic Redbreast! who, at eve and morn,
As meek he sits upon the naked thorn,
A neighbour sweet, and welcome to the poor;
Ev'n he, lorn bird! can gain his *crumb* no more;
That crumb the hungry babes were wont to spare,
Till left themselves to comfortless despair;
Nor household dog, the cottage now can boast,
The poor man's last, best friend in need, is lost!
But luxuries these, and these the poor may spare,
And oh, that these were all they had to bear!

Behold the hamlets, where unroof'd they stand,
Fit habitations for a starving band;
What tho' around them scenes of plenty rise,
And fair above expand benignant skies,
Tho' to their thresholds Ceres leads her train,
And o'er their windows waves th' aspiring grain,

Tho' all they wish, and all they want, be near,
 Ah fruits forbidden! view'd thro' many a tear;
 Tho' bounties seem around their cot to wait,
 Behold a gorgon frowns at every gate,
 A more than fiery dragon guards the store,
 To seize the hard-earn'd morsel of the poor.

O pass these goodly prospects, and survey,
 Of England's peasantry, the dire decay:
 Quit the gay rounds of pleasure for a while,
 Where frolic sports, and fortune wears a smile,
 Where the smooth hours, devote to varied play,
 On downy pinions move, and melt away;
 Fatigued with fullness, or with plenty tir'd,
 With wealth encumber'd, or with passion fir'd,
 O thou WORLD'S MAN, a moment's pause bestow,
 Whilst the muse guides to scenes of *instant* woe,
 Of woe, too vast for patience 'self to bear,
 Ah! haste to view the mansions of despair.

Lo, the gapp'd walls! where time and wealth contend,
 The poor man's dwelling like his heart to rend,

Approach that door, where late the jafmine threw
Its fragrant fcent, and where the woodbine grew
To fhade the bench, at which the matron gay,
And maiden blithe, fang half their hours away,
And work'd the while, 'till labour-time was o'er ;
Ah ! labours feen, and ditties heard no more ;
Labours too foft, and fongs too fweet were they,
To clofe, O Drudgery ! thy iron day.

Trill'd from the joyous vale, no more you hear
The burft of mirth affail the gladden'd ear ;
Labour and laughter mingle now no more ;
The heartlefs fwain fcarce gains his hovel door,
And ah ! when gain'd, what guefts await him there,
To fmooth his fleep, or cheer his waking care ?
For, tho' the hop and elder ripen near,
Denied the rural wine and ftrength'ning beer ;
Purloin'd each cordial, every comfort gone,
Nor aught to greet him when his work is done.

And where is HEALTH, that us'd to bound along,
Proud of his ruby check and finews ftrong ?
And where is JOLLITY, his twin compeer,
Whofe heart was wont to dance throughout the year ?

And TEMPERANCE, goddess of the golden mien,
To lead her moonlight revels o'er the green?
And where that sabbath of the peasant's year,
When the last corn-load hous'd, has banish'd fear?
The joyous harvest-home, with garlands bound,
By plenty woven, and by pleasure crown'd;
The swain and maiden on the top, conceal'd
Midst fragrant boughs, or by their sports reveal'd?
And where the festival, for ages given,
To sing the bounty of indulgent heav'n;
When hind and husbandman, and lord and swain,
Were softly blended on the social plain;
Or in the good old hall assembled free,
To join and share the poor man's jubilee?

Ah change severe! the ancient customs fail,
And loftier manners, prouder modes prevail;
Tyrant o'er tyrants, lord o'er lords are seen,
That once were friends and neighbours of the green;
And less distinct are now their hills and plains,
Than the proud husbandmen and lowly swains;
The social level of the land is gone,
Alike the farm and farmers are o'ergrown;



Lo! as the fainting labourer stoops to reap,
The deadly drops his clay cold temples sleep;
In pride of youth the supant want prevails,
The subtle falls, and harass'd nature fails.

While the spurn'd cottagers and cottage, whirl'd
With all their claims, are into chaos hurl'd.
No morning carol now regales the ear,
And nought at eve but sounds of grief you hear ;
And nought but haggard shapes and forms you see,
And spectres thin of hollow penury.

Lo ! as the fainting labourer (*d*) stoops to reap,
The deadly drops his clay-cold temples steep ;
In pride of youth the tyrant Want prevails,
The fickle falls, and harras'd nature fails ;
No aid at hand, his fellow-suff'ers round,
Behold him stretch'd a corpse upon the ground :
O for one cordial drop ! in vain the pray'r !
Death, death alone, has sav'd him from despair.

And, hark, to yonder agonizing cries !
By famine struck, the mountain peasant lies ;
Spent is *his* force that us'd the winds to brave,
And dead are half his limbs e'er in the grave.
Able no more to earn their daily bread,
The shiv'ring children cling about his bed :

The rose has wither'd on the daughter's cheek,
 Yet the poor father's heart wants force to break ;
 Languid and faint life lingers in his veins,
 And what the tongue conceals, the look explains ;
 The voice exhausted feebly heaves a sigh,
 And Want has dug his cavern in the eye ;
 On childhood's polish'd brow fits wrinkled care,
 And in the mother's bosom broods despair :
 Unhappy matron ! doom'd by fiends to know,
 The dire excesses of a parent's woe !
 Long time she toils, and waits in patient grief,
 And vainly tries and vainly hopes relief :
 " BREAD FOR MY CHILDREN ; GIVE ME BREAD !" she cries,
 " Ev'n now by hunger struck my husband dies ;
 " His wife must follow fast ; yet save, O save
 " These orphan little ones, and this poor babe,
 " This helpless suckling, starving on my breast."
 Her prayer is scorn'd, her sorrows made a jest,
 The jest of that proud plunderer, who braves
 THE POOR MAN'S CURSE, nor heeds when famine craves !

Nor only spurn'd, but menac'd with the law,
 And prison stern, the matron seeks her straw ;

Returns to view her starvelings as they lie,
Worse lodg'd and fed than inmates of the sty
In COTTAGE DAYS ! ah days, when each retreat,
Without was simple, and within was neat ;
When food and raiment, plentiful tho' plain,
At once gave pride and vigour to the swain ;
For tho' the mendings of each suit might bear
True witness of the housewife's timely care,
Still was the working-coat of patches clean,
And sabbath-dress, without a darn was seen :
Spruce, strong, and glossy, and of colour true,
Unfading brown, or never-changing blue ;
And waistcoat, flaming as the orb of day,
And jet-black shoes, with ample buckles gay,
Broad as the feet, and made to last them out,
And over all the brave furtout *so* stout,
That scarce three farmers, of this polish'd age,
When sheer *undressing* (*e*) seems the general rage,
The weight could bear ! ah cottage days farewell,
Far other *times*, the Muse, e'er long, shall tell ;

Far other *manners* soon shall stoop to trace,
Far other *men*,—a smooth, degenerate race !
Yet fondly ling'ring, still would pause to view
The much-lov'd cottage days which late she drew ;
In mem'ry's mirror, retrospective trace,
Each genuine pleasure, and each simple grace ;
All that once charm'd the rich, and blest the poor,
And sigh to think those happy days are o'er.

PART II.

BUT not to peasantry these ills confin'd,
The artizan partakes them with the hind ;
City and country share one common fate,
The same effects on the same causes wait.
Chain'd in his noisome shop to stagnant air,
The PETTY TRADESMAN pines in deep despair ;
Now in some dark and vap'rous cell below,
Now in some loft above, he hides his woe ;
Or midst his cares, is urg'd, alas ! the while,
As interest prompts, to force the specious smile.
But ah ! tho' thus to general eyes unknown,
In one poor gloomy nook his griefs are shown,
There, in a crouded room, his children keep
Together huddled, there they starve and weep

Still taught the stranger's wond'ring gaze to shun,
 Like guilty creatures banish'd from the sun ;
 A generous shame the struggling father feels,
 And from the world his tatter'd race conceals ;
 Or, if a shiv'ring spectre dares the day,
 The blushing mother frowns the shade away ;
 Till, press'd too hard, their famine *must* appear,
 And all that industry most dreads is near :
 Writs, executions, bankruptcies ensue ;
 The father's heart shrinks, breaking, from the view :
 His fall once publish'd, all aghast he flies,
 To hide his shame, or in a workhouse dies ;
 While his lost progeny, from door to door,
 Beg their hard bread, or join the public poor.

And, ah! survey another dire excess,
 Another victim of the time's distress,
 Another grief—the hydra of the rest—
 Upon the muse's aking sight is press'd.
 Spirits of PITY ! O from heav'n descend,
 On the dove's pinion, and her plumes extend,
 Yon sad and desolated group to shield,
 Amid the of their HOUSE conceal'd !

Mark yon grey dome, which still attempts to hide
Its drooping honours from insulting pride ;
And tho', alas ! the shell alone remains,
Of what was once the wonder of the plains,
Still does the wreck affect an air of state,
The gapp'd park paleing, and the gapeing gate,
The towers dismantled, and the crumbling wall,
The mould'ring pillars, menacing a fall,
The garden, weeded half, and half in flower,
The broken statues, and disorder'd bower,
The vista trees hewn down beside the way,
E'en like their lord, majestic in decay ;
And, as in better days, the warning bell,
That us'd the hour of social joy to tell,
When gay Festivity pour'd forth his trains,
And gave a general welcome to the swains,
Now sending forth, alas ! an empty sound,
To screen the ruin from the neighbours round.

But oh ! heart piercing sight ! see yonder bed,
Where high-born **LUCIUS** (*f*) lays his anguish'd head ;
A modest patrimony called him lord,
And frugal plenty smil'd upon his board ;

That plenty, well a numerous race supplied,
Nothing superfluous, nothing was denied
Which virtue wish'd, or nature pure might claim,
And smooth his life till public robbers came ;
Till trebled each demand for daily bread,
And not increas'd the means by which they fed ;
Then fire and husband in his breast contend,
While brooding misery excludes a friend ;
To her who shar'd them, scarce he dares impart
The thronging horrors that devour his heart.
In some dim room, with ragged tapestry spread,
As if already number'd with the dead,
On his dire fate, he seeks to muse alone,
While at each thought bursts forth a dismal groan ;
The dread of want comes rushing to his brain,
He smites his boding heart, and groans again !
His children hear, and hastening to his side,
Assert their claims, and may not be denied ;
The suppliant mother too, with tears appeals,
Bathes his cold hand, and with submission kneels ;
Around the fire, as wife and children move,
His bosom swells with terror and with love :



*His children hear and hasting to his side,
Assert their claims, and may not be denied;
The suppliant mother too, with tears appeals,
Bathes his cold hand, and with submission kneels.*

“ And oh, sustaining pillar of our life !
“ Behold,” they cry, “ thy children and thy wife !
“ What tho’ the fates, or men more stern than they,
“ Have swept the half of all our means away ;
“ Tho’ press’d by need, and griefs unfelt before,
“ Early and sudden number’d with the poor,
“ Still is our comfort lodg’d within thy breast ;
“ Sustain misfortune, and we still are blest !”

Dark though his thoughts, and dire his looks before,
Touch’d by their prayer, again resign’d, he bore
The thousand sorrows that insidious wait
On the reverses of the fallen Great ;
Love bids him still uncounted wrongs endure ;
But ah ! a wounded spirit who can cure ?
And sure, of all whom indigence has curs’d,
A GENTLEMAN REDUC’D is still the worst :
The man, of feelings great, and fortunes small,
Still forc’d to live, as if no ills at all
Press’d on his mind, that death-blow to escape,
The “ oppressor’s contumely,” in pity’s shape,
That fraudulent pity, smiling on the fore,
Which upstarts bring on the illustrious poor.

And oh, what numbers now are doom'd to feel,
This keenest torture on misfortune's wheel ;
This rending rack of body and of mind,
The last excess of tyranny refin'd !
No *coup de grace*, alas ! these victims know,
A noble pauper leads a life of woe :
His pains increase with ev'ry rising year ;
The more his need, the less it must appear :
For, as his goodly sons, and daughters fair,
The cause of all his joys, and all his care,
Approach to womanhood, and man's estate,
And touch the awful crisis of their fate,
How must each minute of a father's hours—
If spoilers undermine his scanty powers,
While slender means must mighty ends supply—
Be pass'd in dread, and counted with a sigh.

Ah, little know the rich, what pains molest,
In times like these, a parent's throbbing breast ;
Ah, little think they, as in rooms of state,
Midst flatt'ring mirrors, and unwieldy plate ;
Or, fagg'd with yawning indolence, supine
On yielding down repose ; from silver dine,

While swoln abundance the gorg'd banquet spreads,
And favoring fortune cloudless sunshine sheds
Thro' life, perchance, but as one summer day,
And every hour is taught to smile away ;
Ah, little can they judge what LUCIUS knew,
As near his tott'ring hall fierce Famine drew ;
Or, to prevent the fiend from ent'ring there,
And save his offspring from the last despair,
What thoughts annoy, what bitter fears invade,
What arts are tried, what sacrifices made ;
How the fond mother, tho' to softness bred,
Turns every thrifty talent into bread ;
And every present, e'en of bridal days,
Converts to housewifery a thousand ways ;
Or, how the daughters, from the world to keep
Their father's wrongs and sorrows, work and weep ;
And, lest those wrongs and sorrows should be told,
Turn every youthful ornament to gold :
The hoarded tokens, and the keepsakes dear,
And love's soft pledge is sold without a tear ;
Save that one precious drop perchance may rise,
When at their father's feet their small supplies

They blushing lay, and as they trembling kneel,
Daughters alone can tell what daughters feel.
While the lorn father, still from foes to hide,
And spare the cureless wound of generous pride ;
Yet more from friends, to veil his home-felt woes,
His food, his raiment, and his rest foregoes.

Yet ah, with stern economy extreme,
How hard to shun a grief still more supreme !
The frantic father sudden snatch'd away ;
The daughters made of villany the prey ;
The sons, still buffeting misfortune's flood,
Or their hands bath'd in a betrayer's blood ;
The widow to her morsel left alone,
Or, with her beauteous wrecks, promiscuous thrown
On the hard world, with every shock beside
Of fallen fortunes, and of wounded pride.

Ye happier beings ! blest in fortune's store,
On mimic ruins waste your wealth no more ;
Your mould'ring monuments no more repair,
Far other ruins henceforth be your care :

Search for the failing towers of human kind,
And save that noblest edifice, the mind ;
The central column of the dome defend,
Nor let the glory of the fabric bend :
The fabric nods ! ah, leave your barren walls,
And prop the throne of reason e're it falls !
Such be th' improvements of thy vast domain ;
Without them, parks and palaces are vain :
O be the generous architects, to plan
How best to renovate decaying man ;
The fragments gather, where in dust they lie,
And heav'n shall bless the work of charity.

SUCH are the POOR I sing. The poor ! vain phrase,
Which more man's pride, than nature's truth displays,
Which more man's pride, than heav'n itself design'd,
When first it gave creation to our kind ;
Gave it to sov'reign man in trust, to spare
Bird, beast, fish, insect, their appropriate share.
A mighty mass of wood-land and of wave,
Where food and drink, a cradle and a grave
The savage fought, and as he roam'd around,
Bold, and at large, the undivided ground ;

No check he knew, the world seem'd his alone,
 The land, the water, and the skies his own ;
 And tho' a myriad more pursued the plan,
 And felt, like him, the claims of natural man ;
 Tho' tyrants chain'd at last the free-born soul,
 'Twas long e'er men from men would brook controul ;
 Equal at first by nature as by birth,
 Long e'er they fought for morsels of the earth ;
 Thro' the dark wilderneys—a world of wood !
 The war was wag'd alone for needful food,
 Yet 'twas not right, 'twas violence, 'twas wrong,
 And all the affassin passions in a throng,
 Led on by murder, whose unnatural strife,
 Open'd the horrors with a brother's life,
 Broke thy soft bonds, O PEACE ! destroy'd thy charms,
 And brought upon the earth the *curse of arms*.

Then, all at once let loose, the furies reign'd,
 And the polluted earth with blood was stain'd ;
 Then was superior strength the better cause,
 And ravish'd spoils were charter'd by the laws ;
 Such laws as tygers, and as wolves obey,
 Who make the weaker animals their prey ;

Plunder was property; yet rich and poor
Remain'd unclass'd, till innocence was o'er.
Talk'ft thou of first establishments? Beware!
All, all the crimson marks of *force* declare;
To fix them, fraud and tyranny combin'd,
The strong insisted, and the weak resign'd;
Call them encroachments, gain'd by wily art,
Or deeds of blood, unaction'd by the heart:
The sceptre snatch'd from nature's equal hand,
A bold usurper filted to command.
The rightful power dethron'd, distinctions came:
Proud wealth! thy source should tinge thy cheek with
 shame;
And tho' thy golden streams now own a bound,
Which social order has embank'd around,
The troubled waters still some foulness shew,
To note the sullied fountain whence they flow.

Yet vast is privilege! by time maintain'd,
And strong is power! by time and laws sustain'd.
What fortune-favour'd mortal would forego
The proud supremacy of high o'er low?

The awful barrier plac'd 'twixt mine and thine,
 Is now enjoy'd, as if by right divine,
 And may no flock disturb th' adjusted plan,
 The settled compact betwixt man and man!
 Whate'er the vice that first exacted claim,
 Virtue and order are at length the same;
 Long may they stand from each new system free,
 If revolutions bring back anarchy!
 When fiery spirits a new world arrange,
 Tho' grand the aim, how perilous the change!
 Tho' darkling chaos, beauteous rose from night,
 It claim'd the God to place the atoms right.

Would power sustain th' advantage it has gain'd?
 Be it with liberal modesty sustain'd:
 To reach the end of all man's wealth and care,
 The means how easy—to enjoy and share.
 The polish'd links that form the social chain,
 For ages still to ages may remain,
 Nor snapt by rage, nor undermin'd by art,
 If well the rivets join in every part;
 But if those links that would the peasant bind,
 Gall his chaf'd body, and corrode his mind,

The poor man's iron, and the rich man's gold,
Say, who the future changes may unfold ?

O more than blind, who would not freely share !
O more than base, who bid the poor despair !
Hope smiling by, with energy they toil ;
Their hands, their hearts, their lives are in the soil ;
From every acre dress'd, they see their wealth,
And every acre clear'd, adds joy to health ;
Bride, children, friends, urge every generous pow'r,
And do the work of summers in an hour :
Scorch'd by the sun, or freezing in the wind ;
The stern extremes are baffled by the mind.
Sweet to the sense, the fond possessions come,
The cooling arbour, and the warming home ;
That grants the shade, and this the blazing fire,
And nature's genuine joys, that never tire.

Ask we the CAUSE why earth supplies in vain,
Th' abundant herbage and luxuriant grain ;
Why, when the golden sheaves mountains rise,—
Bending as if in homage to the skies—

Those golden sheaves refuse their aid to yield,
To such alone as sow and reap the field ?
Why, though unnumber'd sheep the hills bestow,
And herds unrivall'd in the vallies lowe ;
Half of our unfed Britons pining stand,
As if vile outcasts on a desert land ?
Why, as if thrown on some malignant rock,
The shepherd starves encircled by his flock ?
Why, myriads fainting with unceasing toil,
Which us'd to feed them, famish on the soil ?
And why, when heav'n has blest the bounteous earth,
The POOR still find an universal dearth ?

Say, can the Nine, though all should lend their aid,
To paint the varied ills which now invade
Th' uncheery hut, tell the dire cares that wait
Upon the pillag'd peasant's hapless state ?
O can their powers combin'd, suffice to trace
Britannia's scourge, the empire's deep disgrace ;
Or half the death-dark plagues unfold
Of trade's stern tyrant, and the slaves of gold ?

Ascend yon hill, and give thy straining eye
To view the stretching landscapes as they lie,
In many an ample sweep of varying ground,
With all the flocks and herds that graze around ;
The level pastures, and the mountains steep,
The intermediate vales, and forests deep.
Time was, when twice ten husbandmen were fed,
And all their wholesome progeny found bread,
And a soft home, each in his modest farm,
By tillage of those lands—and raiment warm ;
The cloak of scarlet die, so bright and clean,
And one of silk, on sabbath only seen ;
And yet a third, of goodly camblet neat,
For winter days, extending to the feet.
Then took at plough the son and fire their turn,
The wife then milk'd the cow, and work'd the churn ;
And many a mile the daughter trudg'd with ease,
To vend her butter, chickens, eggs, and cheese ;
And, home returning, heavy laden, brought
Full many an article at market bought ;
And tho' she bow'd beneath her basket's weight,
Oft would she sing the country maiden's fate ;

And haply, sweetheart, who in ambush lay,
To ease her load, would join her on the way :
Well-pleas'd was he, that useful load to bear,
Yet saw, with wife delight, the damsel's care :
Good signs of future helpmate there were shown,
And, as he smil'd, he mark'd her for his own ;
Whisper'd his wish to share her toils for life,
Purchas'd the ring with speed, and call'd her wife.

Nor came she portionless ; nor to his arms
Brought only virtue, love, and native charms ;
Tho' these were wealth, but kin, on either side
Enrich'd the bridegroom, and endow'd the bride :
Of kine a pair to each, of sheep a score,
The parents furnish'd from their well-earn'd store :
A waggon this, and that a team bestow'd,
While from the heart's pure source each love-gift flow'd :
Of linen too a flock, and spun at home,
And a best bed, to deck the nuptial room ;
Yet quilt and curtains, by the matron wrought,
And nothing but the wood and ticking bought ;
From their well-feather'd flock the pillow's down,
And all the toilet ornaments their own :

And polish'd looking-glasses and pictures gay,
For parlour, us'd alone on holy day !
Or christmas time, or merry-making sweet,
When the kind landlord deign'd to share the treat ;
And joy'd to see the harvest-barn was fill'd,
And felt at heart how well his farm was till'd :
His LITTLE farm, which ease and health display'd,
And happy tenants, happy landlords made.

And thus from three-score acres, duly dress'd,
The numerous tribe of old and young were bless'd ;
And all the country gaily smil'd to see
The country's wealth—a thriving peasantry !
Lords, swains, and husbandmen each other cheer'd,
And mutual profits mutual cares endear'd ;
By day the labourer at the farm was fed,
In his own cottage found a nightly bed ;
And all his sun-tann'd children, and his wife,
Gave zest to toil, and energy to life ;
And thus for ages far'd the rural train,
Nor plague, nor famine, scourg'd the blissful plain.

Past are these scenes, the bloomy substance fled,
Lo! the thin shadows offer'd in their stead.
See from the summit where thou stand'st, the pride
That arrogantly grasps the prospect wide:
Ah me! that lofty mountain but commands
One tyrant husbandman's half-cultur'd lands;
Insatiate giant of the plunder'd plains,
At once the scourge and terror of the swains;
A vain usurper of the country round,
Possessing, yet encumbering the ground,
In deep caroufal, high above his lord,
This village despot can each vice afford,
That luxury suggests to ill-got wealth,
The bane at once of virtue and of health.

The horn invites! the tyrant scours the lawn,
While his poor vassals, up at peep of dawn,
With trembling hands the heavy plough-share guide,
Each cheary hope, each cordial thought deny'd;
For pleasure foremost of the noisy throng,
The farmer-sportsman whirls his steed along;

Purse-proud and vain, behold he takes the field,
And joys to see the 'squire and huntsman yield;
And as he stretches o'er his rented grounds,
Mark'd for his own, he cheers the panting hounds,
Than they more fell, and eager in the chace,
Nor gate, nor stream, obstruct his headlong pace.
His drudging slaves at plough, their master spy,
And work the furrow as he gallops by;
And as at eve they pass his mansion proud,
And scent the feast, and hear the orgies loud
Of wanton jests, deep draughts, and toasts prophane,—
“Ruin to landlords,” and, “the farmers gain;”
And see the smoaking viands, costly wine,
And fragments that might all their households dine,
Yet not one meal their fainting hearts to cheer,
But unsubstantial roots, and meagre beer;
While through the night this tyrant of the plain,
Till nature sickens holds his revel reign,
Then reels to rest, with feverish mixtures fill'd,
His mind disorder'd, and his body swill'd;
Nor does he rise from his enfeebling bed,
Till the poor victim-swain had left his shed

Full many a weary hour, and fat him down
 On the brown glebe, to eat his crust more brown ;
 Dark, coarse, and scanty, and in sorrow earn'd,
 And harder than the clod e'er yet up-turn'd:
 Such thro' the year is that poor victim's plan,
 And such the life of farmer-gentleman.

But, for the ladies ! come ye muses nine,
 Soften the numbers, and the song refine ;
 O deign, with bright Apollo at your head,
 In beauty's cause, my great attempt to aid ;
 Fain would I reach a theme yet new to rhyme,
 The lady-farmers of the present time !
 No village dames and maidens now are seen,
 But madams, and the misses of the green !
 Farm-house, and farm too, are in deep disgrace,
 'Tis now the LODGE, the COTTAGE, or the PLACE !
 Or if a farm, *ferme ornee* is the phrase !
 And if a COTTAGE, of these modern days,
 Expect no more to see the straw-built shed,
 But a fantastic villa in its stead !

Pride, thinly veil'd in mock humility ;
The name of cot, without its poverty !
By affectation, still with thatching crown'd ;
By affectation, still with ivy bound ;
By affectation, still the mantling vine
The door-way and the window-frames entwine ;
Yet hawthorn bowers, and benches near the grove,
Give place to temples, and the rich alcove ;
A naked Venus here, a Bacchus there,
And mimic ruins, kept in good repair ;
The real rustic's sweet, and simple bounds,
Quick-set and garden chang'd to pleasure-grounds,
And the fresh sod, that form'd the walls so green,
The strawberry bed, and currant-bush between,
The honey-suckle hedge, and lily tall,
Yield to the shrubbery, and high-rais'd wall :—
This for exotics, of botanic fame,
Of which the lady hardly knows the name ;
Yet, as with country friend she goes the round,
She christens them with words of learned sound :
The wall, in foreign fruits so rich and fine,
Forms the desert, when farmer-gentry dine !

And then for water ! geese and ducks no more
Have leave to puddle round a modern door ;
Fair on a glassy lake they sail in state,
And seem to know a prouder change of fate ;
From thence, on china serv'd, they grace the dish,
And rise in honours with the silver fish :
What animal would scruple to resign
Its transient life, for gentlefolk so fine !

Thrice hail, ye dainty dames, your favour'd lots !
But who shall paint the interior of your cots ?
The farm-ville furniture ! O bounteous nine,
Again I supplicate your smiles divine ;
Grant me to sing the sideboards, sofas, chairs,
Where charming ladies play off charming airs ;
Grant me to sing the celleret's supply,
Where, duly rang'd, stands each day's luxury :
The cherry-bounce, for sportsman's whet at dawn,
Hung beef, the relish, and the tempting brawn ;
The rich *Noyaux*, for madam at her routs,
The soothing Nantz, for madam in her pouts ;
The luscious shrub, to take of punch a tiff,
When farmer-gentleman and lady miss ;

For who could deem that so polite a pair,
Without some acid, all their sweets could bear ?
Or who could think a couple so well-bred,
Without some polish'd strife at board or bed ?
Nor leave me, muses, but my steps attend,
Whilst I essay the chambers to ascend—
Apartments sacred to the farming fair,
When for the monthly ball the belles prepare !
And, O pale peasant, could you enter too,
And, at high toilet-time, the proud-one view,
Just as from glossy drawers, with gilded locks,
The crowded wardrobe, and the essenc'd box,
She takes her pageantries and costly toys,
Which folly buys, and vanity enjoys :
The ostrich feathers, nodding on her crest,
And gaudy baubles, dangling at her breast ;
How could thy grief-wrung heart its scorn retain ?
What could thy just, indignant rage restrain ?
To see, exhausted on one loaded head,
More than would fill with joy thy empty shed !
To see the wealth, thy industry has made—
Fruit of thy scythe, thy fickle, and thy spade—

All, all laid waste to ape gentility,
 And ah, far worse, to make a slave of thee!

But lo! my *lady* stands prepar'd to go;
 And fluttering joins, full-plum'd, some farmer-beau;
 Trick'd off, like madam, for the important night,
 To all, but to himself and her, a fright;
 Some farmer-beau, but not her own GREAT man,
 True to the mode, *he* forms a separate plan,
 Enjoys a private party snug at home,
 Or, about midnight, strolls into the room,
 With bungling *nonchalance*, and faucy air,
 To loll, to lounge, to faunter, and to stare,
 Aloud to prattle, voluble and free,
 With friend—as much the gentleman as he.

Hail, NONCHALANCE! dear care-for-nothing power!
 Tranquil associate of the vacant hour!
 Ease, born thee to indifference, thy fire,
 And both a torpid apathy inspire;
 No fights, or scenes, thy senses are to move,
 Nor storms of rage, nor gales of gentle love;

No thought thy fober pulses are to fire,
 Thine the old wisdom—nothing to admire !
 In prime of youth, thy languid limbs move slow,
 And in a sleep, thro' life thou seemst to go ;
 Guest, friend, and stranger, all alike to thee,
 Thou'rt too much in the *ton* to hear or see ;
 That glass around thy neck, no doubt, supplies
 The fashionable dimness of thy eyes ;
 It is vulgar, too, to speak above the breath !
 And be the subject, battle, murder, death,
 When thousands fell, *unpleasant* is the word,
Really unpleasant ! and that scarcely heard.
 Ah ! long our farmer-beaux and belles must strain,
 E'er they such well-bred imperfections gain !

But hark ! the ball-hour strikes ! yet how the place
 To gain in style, and with a decent grace !
 Heav'ns ! shall a couple so be-deck'd and gay,
 Like vulgar beings, move jog-trot away,
 Deign, in a bobbing, one-horse-chaise to ride,
 Like clod-born spouse and help-mate, side by side ?
 Forbid it fashion ! haste, the GIG prepare,
 Harness the pamper'd ponies to the car !

Behold they come, and sweetly-pawing stand,
While to her 'squire the lady gives her hand ;
Bungling she tries the fashionable bound,
Yet new to flight, she just escapes the ground ;
Bodies terrestrial shew their mortal birth,
Mount heavy, and soon gravitate to earth ;
Her feat secur'd, she manages the thong,
And guides the reins, and proudly drives along ;
Feather'd and fierce like warriors they appear,
The hero he, and she the charioteer ;
At length they stop triumphant at the door,
Scoff of the rich, and horror of the poor.

But lo ! she enters ! realms of gay delight,
O spare her senses, nor o'er-power them quite ;
The first in glitter, tho' the last in place,
In vain she strives to be the first in grace ;
Affected, awkward, romping, and yet prim,
Labouring she tries to catch the easy swim,
The step of breeding, and the port serene,
The educated air, and fashion'd mein,
The wond'rous magic, that, by sweet surprise,
From look, from motion, and from silence rise ;

The eloquence that wins without a found,
And the soft charms, in gentle manners found.
But ah ! 'twixt ladies born, and newly made,
Less wide the line 'twixt buckram and brocade :
Tho' *this*, perchance, more stately may appear,
A goodly richness still attends the wear ;
Its vulgar stiffness *that* awhile retains,
And nothing soon but flimsiness remains.

Yet happy vanity, and kind self-love,
A tender couple ! all they do, approve ;
Conscious alone of merit and of charms,
Nor sneers abash, nor ridicule alarms ;
And when the public laughter they provoke,
To serious praise they turn the taunting joke ;
Or, should grave wisdom hiss them as they go,
Still smooth in Flattery's glass, their follies shew.
Blest mirror ! which can thus, with magic pow'r,
Give the rank weed the fragrance of the flow'r ;
And from deformities,—without, within,
Spots in the mind, or specks upon the skin —
Can all that's good, and all that's fair reflect,
And change to beauty, every dark defect.

Her own fond image in this prism survey'd,
 The farmer-lady sees a grace display'd ;
 Sees, that the general gaze her beauty draws,
 And in the general titter, hears applause ;
 Clumsy, yet strong, like her own team at plough,
 She fags the fidler and runs down the beaux,
 'Till having nobly danc'd each couple out,—
 E'en like her merry lord h's drinking rout,—
 With shawls and swan-downs fenc'd from morning air,
 Again she mounts the corn-defrauded car ;
 Then seeks, full speed, her ornamented bed,
 While plenty twines a wheatsheaf round her head.

But the tir'd hunt allows a vacant day ;
 Trade takes its turn, and interest has its sway.
 The bold monopolist, and jobber fly,
 Resum'd—(the farmer-gentleman laid by)
 The varied wiles of avarice are tried,
 And the forefallers subtlest engines plied ;
 Regraters, dealers—an insidious train !
 Middle and mealmen yield the soul to gain ;
 Bakers and badgers—each inferior slave,
 The humble drudges of a prouder knave,

Ready and eager for each crime as he,
 The mean jackalls of loftier perfidy ;
 Prompt to provide their rabid masters fell,
 As hell's grim lord employs the slaves of hell.
 THRIFT is the word—the bottle and the friend,
 The hound and hunter, to the idol bend ;
 The *golden* idol, at whose shrine they vow,
 E'en as the foul banditti suppliant bow,
 That hecatombs on hecatombs shall bleed,
 When the rich crops the swains no longer need ;
 Bound by a horrid league—the harvest o'er,—
 To offer up in sacrifice—The POOR.

And see that league to prosper, how they toil,
 Strip bare their parent earth, and the rich spoil,
 Convey by miscreant stealth, those stores design'd
 By bounteous heav'n, to feed and cloath mankind !
 As the deep warehouse opes its massy doors,
 Far from pale famine, plenty sends its stores :
 Roll'd to the busy wharfs, the ready barge,
 Upon the smooth canal receives the charge ;
 The fraudulent hoards deep laden to the brim,
 Sacks pil'd on sacks, as heavily they swim

Far from the starving town—the thronging poor
In dire dismay stand gazing on the shore.
With ragged garments, and with haggard mein,
From alleys dark and foul, and lanes obscene,
In squalid groups they eager press around,
Silent awhile from horror too profound
For words or voice, but as the freight moves by,
And wealth observes it with triumphant eye,
A growing murmur gathers on the strand,
And mingled anguish stirs the meagre band;
The ruffian dealers see the tempest near,
And as the thunders of the mob they hear
Begin to burst, the conscious cowards fly,
With all the speed of trembling infamy.

But hark ! the storm is up ! 'tis HUNGER raves !
The phrenzied power that every peril braves ;
Press'd by the irritating want he feels,
Daring he moves—the rabble at his heels :
But wildly hurried to each desperate deed,
Too oft the guiltless, with the guilty bleed,
Till outrag'd order, in the public cause,
To check huge uproar, calls the aiding laws ;

To the loud trumpet, and resounding drum,
Dreadful in arms ! behold they marshall'd come ;
Kindling in rage, ah ! see they rush along,
And with superior force disperse the throng.
Ill-fated tribes ! to their dark cells they go,
With mingled groans and curses on their foe ;
While the triumphant plunderers conceal'd,
Securely skulk behind the legal shield.

O alter'd England ! sudden, dire, and strange,
Dishonouring to thy generous heart, the change !
Scarce can thy peasants know thee for their own—
For many an age, their castle and their throne.
Two sin-got monsters, imp'd by force and guile,
With giant footsteps stalk thy injured isle ;
Both the foul offspring of the miser's hoard,
Gaunt FAMINE here, and there the flaming SWORD ;
Twin centinels ! to grind, not guard the poor,
And drive each angel guest from labour's door.

But soft, 'tis midnight ! and while sleep the swains,
By magic moves the produce of the plains ;

Deep groan the waggons with their pondrous loads,
As their dark course they bend along the roads ;
Wheel following wheel, in dread procession flow,
With half a harvest, to their *points* they go,
Their *magic* points—by water and by land—
Known to the tyrants and their hireling band.
The secret expedition, like the night
That covers its intents, still shuns the light ;
And, e'er the morning blushes on the deed,
The teams return, and all the plots succeed,
While the poor ploughman, when he leaves his bed,
Sees the huge barn as empty as his shed.

Dark Night! couldst thou unfold the darker tale,
Of craft and fraud thy raven pinions veil ;
Or thou, pale moon ! take up the guilty theme,
When the stol'n goods, beneath thy trembling beam,
Pass thief-like on, to work a people's woe,
Where small canals to mighty rivers flow ;
Thence, could parental Thames, or Severn, tell
What freights of villany their bosoms swell ;
What hoarded stores, that might a people save,
There find, alas ! a banishment or grave ;

Rat-gnaw'd and rotted—lost to human use,
Accursed Avarice! by thy base abuse;
O what tremendous scenes would meet the view,
To make wrong'd England start, and tremble too!

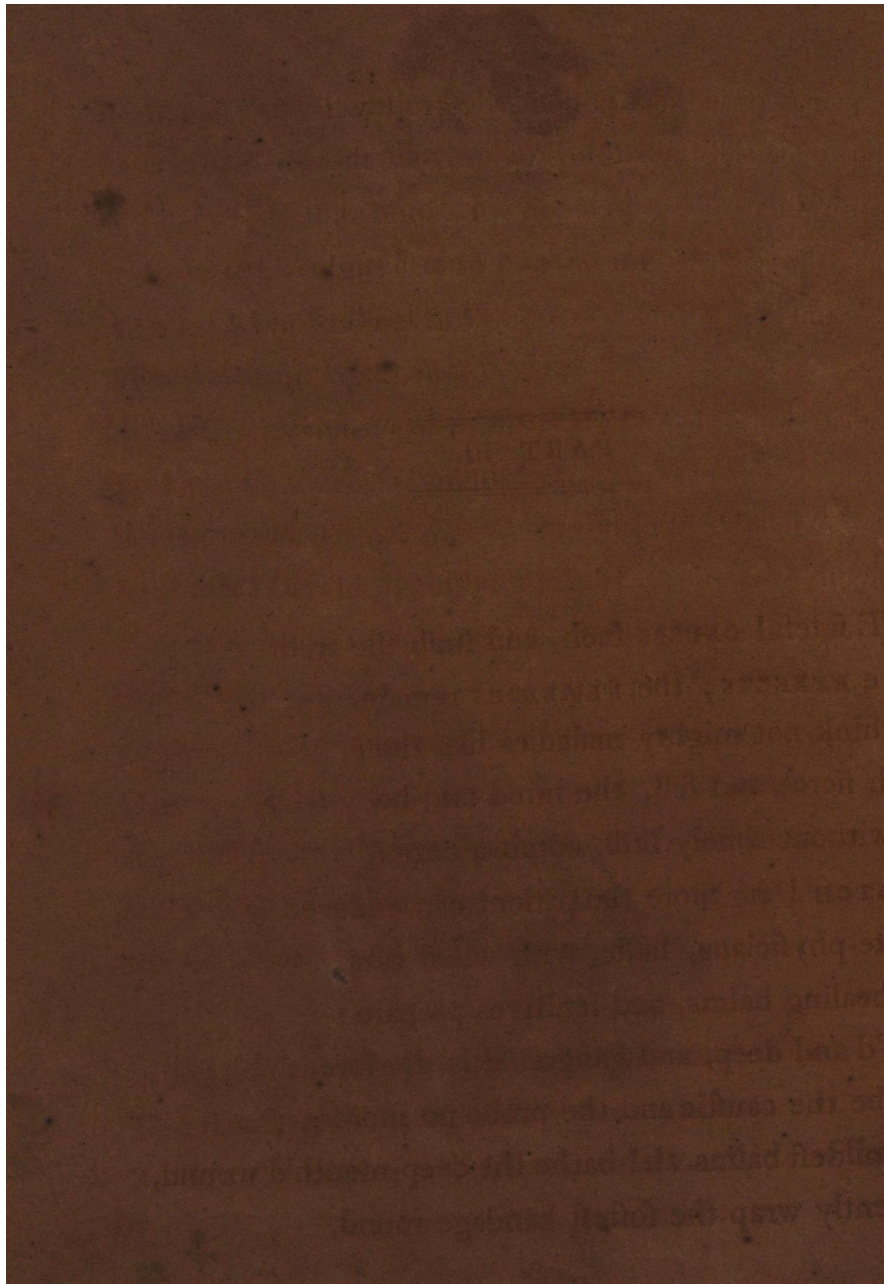
Nor solely from these deeds of darkness flow,
A nation's famine, and a people's woe;
Full many a mystic stratagem beside,
Conspire to spread the public pest more wide;
The wealthy speculator buys the grain
Of the poor tenant, e'er it leaves the plain;
E'en as the tender blade begins to rise,
The dealer sees it with a dealer's eyes;
Contracts for all the tillage as it grows,
For how shall penury the rich oppose?
The slender farmer, by his wants oppress'd,
Weigh'd down by children, and by debts distress'd,
His future hopes must sell for present bread,
Or leave, alas! his family un-fed.

But see, the *rural* BANKS! (*g*) these, prompt supply
The rich with wings, above the poor to fly;

On pinions, not of gold, ambitious grown,
They speed to many a burg and market town :
Thus, shop-keepers are public treasurers made,
And banking dwindles to a vulgar trade.
Lo ! just in twain the country counter splits,
And here a banker, there a grocer fits ;
Or, in one shop two different crafts are plied,
A draper's this, and that the banker's fide ;
And, while the wife the gauze and ribbon measures,
The husband, snug embox'd, deals out the treasures :
Congenial trades ! both airy, thin, and light ;
Yet one advent'rous as a paper-kite !
But like a kite, alas ! will often fall
Becalm'd, and shiver paper-kite and all ;
Th' elastic pow'r that made it mount so fair,
Once dropt, the pompous plaything's lost in air.

Yet these alone the opulent befriend ;
Ah ! who to foil the rich, the poor will lend ?
The needy farmer when his crop is sold,
Sad and reluctant takes the tempting gold ;
And as each day still makes his little less,
While nature's smiles the growing plenty blefs,

The prospect seems upon his eye to low'r,
And vain the soft supplies of sun and shower ;
No more he views the scene with fond delight ;
Thick fill the ears—he sickens at the sight ;
And when ripe autumn brings the harvest on,
Feebly he toils—his energy is gone ;
His very hopes are fold ; no more the field
Tho' crown'd with sheaves, a master's joy can yield ;
He seems to take an hireling servant's place,
His wife and children, share the deep disgrace ;
Till sunk at last, and spent his scanty store,
He stoops to glean the fields he farm'd before.



PART III.

THE fateful CAUSES such, and such the train
Of dire EFFECTS ; the REMEDIES remain.
Yet, think not mighty maladies like these,
Which fierce and fell, the mind and body seize,
Can, without timely skill, admit a cure :
DISPATCH ! no more the patient can endure.
Ye state-physicians, haste, with wisest care
Your healing balms, and lenitives prepare ;
Inflam'd and deep, and gangren'd is the sore,
Prescribe the caustic and the probe no more ;
With mildest balms, ah ! bathe the deep-mouth'd wound,
And gently wrap the softest bandage round,

By bland degrees relieve the aching sense,
And instant banish all corrosives hence.

Avaunt Coercion ! woo each kinder power,
And lead her smiling to the peasant's door :
Tyrant avaunt ! to other regions fly,
Or to thy frozen, or thy torrid sky ;
To harems, cloisters, nunneries, and caves,
Where equal beings sink to couching slaves,
And superstition's melancholy train,
Pine and decay that hypocrites may reign :
Speed baneful monster with thy hated band—
But tremble to approach fair Albion's land ;
Dare not to blast Britannia's humblest flower,
A goddess arm'd, late shielded every bower ;
BRITANNIA and fair FREEDOM were the same,
Sacred allies that differ'd but in name.

Thinkst thou by vestrys, and the penal code,
The slave's correction, and the negro's rod,
Russia's fell knout, or Afric's hateful sway,
To *force* an ENGLISH peasant to obey ?

To bend his spirit, and to bow his knee,
Taught but to worship GOD and LIBERTY?
An hundred years twice told, have proved how vain
The beadle's lash, the prison, and the chain;
Compulsion's (*h*) cruel system has but shewn,
The ploughman's heart is lofty as thine own;
At bonds, with pride like thine, his bosom swells,
Tis a rich touch of England that rebels;
Tis kindred honour gives the quick alarm,
When-e'er oppression lifts the tyrant arm:
Check not the virtuous principle which leads,
The brave plebeian to patrician deeds;
The hind who draws the harrow o'er the land,
May be the first to lead a warlike band;
Or on the foamy flood, or tented field,
In glory's hour, may be the last to yield;
With skill encourag'd, and with skill reprov'd,
Right may be strengthen'd, wrong may be remov'd;
But vile Coercion!—where's the honest mind,
That is by choice to tyranny resign'd?
Where the gall'd wretch that does not curse his fate,
And silent bear th' oppressor deadliest hate;

Where e'en the tyrant, 'midst his pride and self,
Conscious of crime, who does not scorn himself?

Ask thy own heart what most its love inspires?
What most its generous indignation fires?
Honest to nature; see the prompt reply
Glow in the smile, or struggles in the sigh;
And this great truth forever shall remain,
The mark alike of sovereign and of swain—
Choice and free-will, and kindness make the brave;
Compulsion, harshness, tyranny, the slave.

Misdeem not of the Poor: the pendant globe,
From labour borrows its resplendent robe;
The fruits and flowers that on its surface rise,
The generous labour of the swain supplies;
The forests which now grace, now guard the land,
Owe all their pride and power to labour's hand;
The quarry'd stone, hid deep beneath the soil,
Yields but to labour's persevering toil;
The sparkling gem embowell'd late in earth,
To labour owes its honours and its birth;

Drossy and dark still had it gloom'd unknown,
Nor grac'd the beauty, nor enrich'd the throne,
Nor had the landscape charm'd the painter's eye,
But for thy aid, O patient DRUDGERY!
Bow'd by thy axe, the oaks stupendous fall,
And mount again Britannia's proudest wall;
Fresh from thy plough the faithful seeds arise;
Rich from thy sickle the ripe harvest lies;
Beneath thy scythe peeps forth the tender green;
Fair from thy spade expands each beauteous scene;
To thee the poet owes his favourite flower,
Science her studious walk, and love his bower;
Peace, war, and solitude, and social ease,
Pleasure and health, and sorrow and disease;
The couch's softness and the pillow's down,
From thee derive a lustre not their own.

Ah! say, are nature's bloomy days forgot,
When powers august, were inmates of the cot;
And fix'd in rustic sheds their equal throne,
E'er cities, palaces, or courts were known;
When nature chose, and crown'd her scepter'd three
And nam'd them LABOUR, HEALTH, and LIBERTY;

Her own triumvirate, who awful fate,
With in-born majesty, and simple state ?

Sweet to command, yet sweeter to obey,
When happy subjects yield to happy sway :
Rude tho' the soil, they tam'd it while they sung,
And all the echoes of their empire rung :
A forest-empire ! but the lusty stroke
Repeated strong, th' umbrageous horror broke ;
The vista opened, and at every fall
Of mingled trees, uprose a verdant wall :
Celestial light, a willing entrance gain'd,
Where brooding darkness in her den had reign'd ;
Beside new path-ways sprung the sportive shade,
Sunbeams shot in, and with the foliage play'd ;
And as by due degrees the woods were clear'd,
Labour, and Health, and Liberty were cheer'd :
Their sturdy arms and dauntless hearts engag'd
With the fierce 'pard, or tyger when enrag'd ;
In native courage mail'd, unaw'd they stood,
Before the monarch-monster of the wood,
Madd'ning with passion, till their arrows sped,
Or gor'd and cow'd, the vanquish'd savage fled.

Triumphant chiefs ! 'twas then their huts arose,
'Twas then they tasted soft and short repose ;
Their sylvan foes subdu'd, they swift began
The brute to limit, and enlarge the man :
Forth came the PLOUGH—thrice honour'd be its birth !
The friend, the tutor of maternal earth ;
Cheer'd by its pow'r the barren mother smil'd,
And saw new blessings rise for every child :
From her full breast her myriad tribes were fed ;
Soft on that breast those myriads found a bed ;
She saw her limbs array'd in beauty's dress,
Her deserts bloom'd, her sons were taught to bless ;
Till smooth'd and soften'd all her features bore
A livelier cast, the savage traits were o'er ;
Huts grew to hamlets, hamlets to a town,
Illustrious Three ! till LONDON was your own.

Then learn at length to reverence the POOR,
And weave a garland round the cottage door ;
Let grateful wealth do homage to the bower,
From whose first lords came riches, ease, and power.

Yes, reverence the Poor ! but ah ! how wide,
The barrier stands 'twixt equity and pride !
The means of life the Poor are now refus'd,
Power, riches, ease, and plenty, all abus'd ;
Yet were what appetite exacts bestow'd,
A mere sufficiency of drink and food,
Thinkst thou, O little skill'd in human kind !
The rational, who can perceive a mind
Stir as the god within, like beasts can feed,
The harness'd oxen, or the bridled steed,
And then, a pause of reason and of sense ?
O be such tyrant precepts banish'd hence ;
Far, far, from England be such maxims sown,
There, still may sense and reason have a throne !
The veriest carl that nature ever made,
Heir to the flail, the wallet, and the spade,
Boasts in fair freedom's isle a free-born mind,
And sighs to share the birth-right of his kind ;
With daily bread, sweet liberty must come,
And happy choice, to eat that bread at home,
In his own ground, his own kind cow must graze,
On his own hearth the frugal faggot blaze ;



*The work-house too! 'in pity, O forbear,"
Exclaims the mother, "so remove us there."
"O do not steal my children from my shed!"*

Pa. 67, PRATT'S POEM OF THE POOR OR COLTAGE: TUESDAY.

Published by the Author, Feb. 13. 1803.

In his own garden must his herbs have grown,
Alike the labours and rewards his own.

Nor think that public charities supply,
Like these, the wants of Britain's peasantry ;
" The poor-house coat, 'tis true, is whole and fine,
" But ah," exclaims the peasant, " 'tis not MINE !
" For some," he cries, " such borrow'd robes may charm,
" Yet save me from that badge upon the arm !
" The work-house rooms more amply are display'd,
" But all the paupers are promiscuous laid ;
" A hundred strangers in one mansion penn'd,
" Without a neighbour, and without a friend ;
" Nor wife, nor child to cheer with tender power,
" The weak, the sad, and solitary hour ;
" My cottage diet too more coarse and scant,
" But ate at will, and not too coarse for want ;
" Let all of mine by their own hands be fed,
" And give me still my labour and my shed."

The WORK-HOUSE (*i*) too ! " In pity, O forbear,"
Exclaims the mother, " to remove me there ;

“ In all my sickness, and in all my pain,
“ Let these poor tatter'd boys and girls remain
“ To share my crust, and sleep upon my bed,
“ O do not steal my children from my shed ;
“ Respect a mother's love, a mother's pride,
“ To see her sons and daughters by her side ;
“ Her love to view them, tho' in tatters blown ;
“ Her pride to think those tatters are their own.”

With all the burthens of a parent's care,
Such are the parent's grief, the parent's prayer ;
Nor think them vain ; 'tis nature that inspires
The love which sorrows, but which never tires ;
The love of progeny—a sacred power !
Felt from the natal to the mortal hour.
Tho' stinted bread, and water from the well,
Were all their food and drink, no tongue can tell
What mothers feel, who see the babes they bred,
Throng to the knee, and clamour round the bed ;
Cling to the bosom for their nurture dear,
And something claim each hour, to warm and cheer ;
Claims that, alas ! each day must multiply,
But want the means their clamours to supply.

Yet think'st thou she who knows a mother's love,
To ease her griefs, her burthens would remove ;
Send from her sight the infant that has drawn
Her matron breast, in helpless childhood's dawn ;
Or, from her ragged offspring e'er could part,
Without a streaming eye, an anguish'd heart ?
Oh no ! the more they need her fostering aid,
The more the ills of childhood's hour invade ;
More eager she to spread the clasping arm ;
More warm the instinct, and more strong the charm :
Nature that gives the transport, soothes the pain,
And helps her own lov'd burthens to sustain.
Avaunt then systems ! barb'rous as unwise,
To move the infant from its mother's eyes ;
Tho' born but yesterday, that pledge in view,
Strong the maternal power, to nature true,
And one soft pressure of its little hand,
E'er yet its tongue can lisp, its feet can stand ;
Or one sweet smile upon its baby brow,
Is to a mother more than mines bestow.

Again the earth with food is cover'd o'er,
Even till her matron breast can hold no more ;

The heapy corn-sheaf crowns her radiant head,
And her capacious arms are fill'd with bread ;
In plenty's form methinks I see her stand
The guardian genius of the burnish'd land ;
Thro' plenty's horn, methinks I hear her sound
A gladfome fummons to her race around,
“ Prepare, prepare my progeny,” she cries,
“ Lo, at your feet the gorgeous harvest lies ;
“ Proud to the fickle springs the ten-fold ear,
“ And heav'n augments the blessings of the year ;
“ And favouring suns, and fostering show'rs combine,
“ Bounteous to give, and make that bounty thine ;
“ Along the mead, and up the mountain's brow,
“ Beside the stream, and down the vale below,
“ Where-ever spreads my beautiful domain,
“ See the ripe harvest woos the generous swain ;
“ Scarcely he stoops to reap th' abundant soil,
“ High to his breast it waves to court his toil.

Our common mother thus, her sons to cheer,
Hail'd the rich promise of her golden year,
And at her bidding, while each anxious swain,
Is snatch'd from Famine, learns to hope again.

Sweet Hope ! methinks I see thee from the skies,
Tint their pale cheeks, and light their languid eyes ;
As from their death-beds, at the morning's break,
Along the dewy meads their course they take.
But ah ! not gay as er'ft they leap'd along,
When heart's were happy, and when limbs were strong ;
More weak and weary now they reach the soil,
Than when in COTTAGE-DAYS they left their toil :
And yet, than sorrow stronger, Hope inspires,
The fainting matrons and the sickly fires,
And withering children, staggering try to walk,
Like frost-nipt buds that tremble on the stalk ;
And, as at length they view the goodly shew,
Of full-ripe corn in rich luxuriance glow ;
As with the beards the breeze begins to play,
Bright burnish'd by the orient funny ray,
Hope comes more closely to the poor man's breast,
And smiling whispers—he shall still be blest ;
Youth looks to joy, and age suspends its grief,
For who denies to smiling Hope belief ?
All rally round her, and return her smile,
Tho' trembling near her stands pale Fear the while.

Yet wherefore should the peasant slaves prepare
To reap the harvest if they may not share ;
Why waste the slender tide that yet remains
Of ebbing life, to *fill* th' oppressor's veins ?
Plund'ers abhorr'd ! if your dark threats portend,
Another season from the poor to rend ;
Ye jobbers' vile ! or by whatever name,
Ye stand recorded on the lists of shame ;—
Ye who ne'er labour on the teeming plain,
But like dire locusts, only eat the grain !
Ye more than savage cannibals, who feed
Upon your kind, without the savage need ;
Devour in fullness, and with tyrant art,
Suck the warm life-blood of your country's heart ;
With more than demon wiles can undermine,
Gifts of the God, and make creation thine ;
Its fruits increase, diminish or supply,
While captive earth shall at your mercy lie ;
If all a poor man's hopes must be o'erthrown,
By yet another famine of your own ;
O spare for once the long-deluded train,
Nor let them work the unrequiting plain.

Even as the groupes now rang'd before thee stand,
For once have pity and dismiss the band ;
Bathe not their bosoms in a thriftless cause,
But grant to withering life, a moment's pause :
Ah! let them die upon their natal spot,
And let each victim perish in his cot.

Yes, wanton Locusts of a foodful isle !
Where upon Freedom, Plenty us'd to smile ;
Where Plenty still supplies her utmost store,
Broad, deep, and vast, to all—but to the Poor.
If every blessing now beneath the sky,
Be doom'd to fate thy fordid gluttony ;
Let thy own pamper'd hand the harvest reap,
And thy own heartless breast the toil-drops steep ;
Let thy own bloated limbs, by vice unbrac'd,
Or, by thy miser's, or thy spendthrift waste ;
Take from thy vassal hinds their useless trade,
The fork, the rake, the plough-share and the spade—
And let them starve ; or, if thy luxury
Demand the fiend-like joy to see them die,
Pronounce their fate when they have dress'd thy grain,
And each shall sink a corpse upon the plain.

Savage ! behold thy triumph, yet beware !
Oft is the spider taken in her snare ;
In her own subtle web has oft been found,
E'en as she threw her latent poisons round.
Hail to the Laws ! the guardians of the land,
And doubly hail'd the props on which they stand ;
Hail Order's fabric ! by true wisdom made ;
And curs'd be they who would the dome invade !
Yet laws there are, whose power each being feels,
Impress'd on every heart with Nature's seals ;
Enroll'd in nature's chancery sublime,
Sanction'd by truth, and unimpair'd by time.
O MAN PRESERVE THYSELF in time of need !
In awful characters so stands the deed :
For this the lamb has bled, the fawn has fought,
And fet the tyrant of the woods at naught ;
The timid hare upon the wolf has sprung,
While deep-ton'd howlings thro' the forest rung ;
And O ! what has not Man achiev'd for this,
On fortune's height, in penury's abyss ?
The trembling coward, and the bending slave,
For this have felt the courage of the brave.

A fiend there is—the despot of our frame,
More fell than death—and FAMINE is his name !
Stung by the rav'nous principle he goes,
Furious and fierce, nor check nor fear he knows ;
The strongest bonds and laws before him fall,
The laws of Famine supersede them all ;
With keener energy he sweeps along
As goads the madd'ning power of hunger strong ;
To bloody victim, victims still succeed,
And bed-rid parents, cradled infants bleed ;
Like the gaunt lion on his prey he pours,
And his own flesh in agony devours :
But for his tyrant—foes of man beware,
Nor dare the view of famine in despair !

Let trembling memory retrace the hour,
When rash rebellion rose on cruel power ;
When son and fire against each other stood,
And Britons waded deep in British blood ;
When ruthless murder dy'd the sanguine plain,
Stained the soft flower and clotted all the grain ;
When England bled, and nature seemed to mourn,
O never, never, may those scenes return !

Yet urge not to extremities, but dread
 To plunge thy country in a war of Bread !
 What can be hop'd from combat or from flight,
 'Gainst Famine arm'd and terrible in might ?
 And what are swords the fury to oppose,
 When the fiend springs in vengeance on his foes ?—
 “ For children living, and for children dead ;
 “ For matrons starving, on a widow'd bed ;
 “ For dire necessity, not wanton rage,”
 Exclaim the Poor, “ for LIFE the war we wage :
 “ We break the social, but not nature's laws,
 “ And heav'n itself will sure befriend our cause !

Rebellion must be crush'd ! the maxim's true ;
 But must not Tyranny be vanquish'd too ?
 Rebellion's treason ; Tyranny is more—
 That 'scapes the traitor's fate, yet robs the Poor.
 Treason should suffer, Tyranny replies ;
 'Tis just—A TRAITOR IN EACH TYRANT LIES.
 Punish all traitors ; but more blest *his* cause,
 Who helps the wretched to respect the laws ;
 By generous succour and by timely care,
 Who rescues want from vice and from despair :

War, famine, treason, kindness may prevent,
And in their place fix comfort and content.

Such was thy bounty WAY (*k*), already known
To smiling heaven, who makes the deed its own ;
But let the widow and her train appear,
To speak their thanks for many a blissful year ;
And lo, with twice-seven rose-cheek'd children round,
Where Suffolk spreads its un aspiring ground,
I see the dame assiduous at her churn,
While all the little hands begin to earn
The bread they take, save the fair suckling small,
And she, well pleased, is nursed in turn by all ;
Shifted from arm to arm with sportive glee,
As each may pause from stronger industry,
Dandled and danced with lullabies and song,
As right the fondness as the language wrong,
And all the nurse-taught eloquence so shrill,
Of potent charm to make the bantling still ;
Or draw its little eyes to sleep, and then,
Cradled and safe—all hands to work again !

Two bounteous cows, and two green pastures fair,
Were all this widow's wealth, and all her care ;
But see the power of *willing* toil, and prove
The force and feeling of maternal love ;
Children twice seven—and fatherless—to feed,
Yet all were kept from nakedness and need ;
See them beneath her care in stature grow
And their young minds with grateful duty glow :
The feeble race grew stronger by degrees,
And what at first was labour, smooth'd to ease.
No parish burthens from her cottage came,
For public alms was felt as public shame ;
No little duns of hers were seen to wait,
At the throng'd cross-way, or the crowded gate ;
Nor tale-taught brats beset the rich man's door ;
Nor could the wealthy rank them with the poor,—
By their own labour were they cloath'd and fed ;
By their own labour they maintain'd their shed.

Blest widow ! may thy table long be crown'd
With all thy goodly plants soft-branching round ;
Beneath the shadow of a vine thine own,
Thy olives flourish near thy rustic throne !

Like hers of holy fame, may grace prevail,
 The meal unwafted, and the crufe ne'er fail;
 Or, should a dearth—a famine of the skies,
 Or, of perfidious men—in Suffolk rise;
 Sky-favor'd! midst thy kinfolk may'ft thou find
 A Ruth unshaken, and a Boaz kind;
 And if, e'er half the span of life be run,
 A death-like sickness should o'ertake thy son,
 O may the prophet's mantle still be given,
 With power to save, or bear thy child to heaven!

And may such gracious blessings be the meed,
 Of all who aid the Poor Man in his need;
 Of all who thus *their* blessings can bestow,
 And the rich joy of well-plac'd bounty know:
 Of noble WINCHELSEA (*l*) who still remains
 The pride and honour of his native plains;
 Whom, even oblivious plenty, has not taught,
 To waste the god-like power that plenty brought:
 And generous WARWICK, (*m*) who indignant stood,
 Bold and unaw'd to check corruption's flood;
 When flush'd with plenty, an insulting band
 Pour'd the foul tide of luxury o'er the land;

And, mad with riot, wanton'd with the store,
 That might have nourish'd the defrauded poor :
 Of sacred GLASSE, (*n*) thrice venerable man !
 From youth to suffering age, still first to plan,
 The rich man's good, the pauper's happiness,
 Friend to the wife, and patron of distress !
 When winter's icy hand benumbs the year,
 His genial blaze the cottage hearth shall cheer ;
 The shiv'ring multitude to him shall fly,
 Whose generous store-shop shall their wants supply.
 Illustrious sage ! should such benevolence,
 Pass the dim world, without its recompence ;
 O what rewards the inspirer has in store,
 When the dim world and all its clouds are o'er ;
 While DURHAM (*o*) who has made the Poor his own,
 A kindred spirit ! shall partake thy throne.

And ye who share Britannia's fertile land,
 What patriot-sages, such as these have plann'd,
 Adopt with liberal zeal ; yet check the proud,
 Nor fear the whisperer base, nor boaster loud—
 Vaunting he holds his thousand acres clear, (*p*)
 And thrice can net his thousand pounds a year ;

And tells what better treats he can afford,
Than thou, his deep-tax'd and declining lord ;
Yet still, tho' late, 'tis left thee to impart,
One useful lesson to his purse-proud heart :
Into ten equal parts (*q*) divide thy grounds,
And let each boaster farm his hundred pounds ;
Tell him, the happiest days his fathers knew,
From modest profits and possessions grew ;
That calm content, with moderate gain, is wealth,
And decent joy, as moderate bulk, is health ;
Peace to the mind, and to the body ease,
While overgrowth in either is disease ;—
Tell him, that merit on such gain may thrive,
And industry upon a tythe can live :
So shall nine starving families be blest,
If thou in fair proportions part the rest ;
So shall each rood unwonted care employ,
And fill thy coffers and thy soul with joy.

But to the drooping peasantry be kind,
The poor, by heav'n, are to the rich assigned ;
Bequeath'd, as if in trust, their wealth to share,
In still small aids that fortune well may spare.

And ah! how oft in fortune's changeful hour,
Are riches weak, and poverty in power?
The shipwreck'd monarch, buffeting the wave,
Death full in view, the mendicant may save;
O think what varied ills around thee wait—
The viewless ministers of awful fate—
Should one of these beguile thy feet astray,
And lead thee darkling thro' some dangerous way;
Where is the clown who would not ope his shed,
And freely share his homely board and bed?
E'en had his weary eyes begun to close,
And his worn limbs to take their short repose;
What hind that heard the lonely stranger's cry,
Would not with winged speed attempt to fly?
Swift would he haste, pursue the piteous sound,
Nor heed the fiery tempest raging round:
Then as he gain'd at length his cottage door,
Hawl his last faggot from his little store;
Chafe the numb'd limbs till genial warmth return'd,
While in his breast a nobler ardour burn'd.

Lo then the spell to charm the peasant mind,
FULFIL THE AWFUL TRUST BY HEAV'N ASSIGN'D!

If thou wilt fix his magic INTEREST there,
Soon shall his country be the Poor Man's care ;
That talismanic tie, however small,
Shall bind in rosy bonds that never gall ;
Like love's own fetters, shall endear the soil,
Sinew his arm and sweeten every toil ;
Shall blend what only Freedom can inspire,
The labourer's patience with the patriot's fire ;
That hallow'd ardour, cherish'd, nurs'd, supply'd,
And *well attemper'd*, is our nature's pride ;
As the flame languishes, the man decays,
But strengthens as the beam of Freedom plays ;
Yet, nor the dog-star's rage, nor meteor's glare,
That withers earth, and desolates the air ;
But, shining clear, like the sun's steady light,
In a pure firmament, benignly bright.

O give the heirs of poverty their cots,
Attach them fondly to their native spots ;
Amidst their thorny paths entwine a flower—
Theirs soft submission, thine attemper'd power ;
Force them no more like banish'd men to roam,
But give to each that balm of life—a HOME !

A HOME, tho' rocking (*r*) on the mountain's brow,
Or plac'd obscure in woodland vales below;
If Loving-kindness smiling steps between,
A guardian visitant! to cheer the scene;
If pity's boon the dreary hearth illumes,
And fashion drops one feather from her plumes,
One useless golden feather as she flies,
Compassion's tax on superfluities—
Labour, and Liberty, and radiant Health,
Shall fill the country with a country's wealth.
As the swain views his speck of property,
In the rude hut a palace shall he see;
Near it shall raise his flow'rs, and nurse his field,
And smile, tho' tempests rage, on what they yield;
From peace-crown'd dwellings of an humbler size,
Shall pleas'd behold (*s*) more lofty mansions rise;
Shall gaze, unenvying, on the rich domain,
Yet of his own a fonder sense retain;
For ah! it stands on consecrated ground,
A charmed circle, tho' a narrow round!
Where, if he finds, in kind benevolence,
Against the beating storm, a generous fence,

In glad return for all thy bounty shewn,
The grateful rustic's hand and heart thy own.

Methinks I see the beauteous tribes that wait,
To crown with joy so blest a change of fate,
Content and Neatness, cottage gods! shall grace,
And Hope with Heav'n's own bloom shall mark the place;
And with them fair Frugality shall come,
And sage Economy resume her home;
And careful youth, (t) like age, shall learn to hoard,
That yet a dearer guest may bless his board;
That Love himself may there a throne obtain,
When Industry the envied sum shall gain,
And honour'd Hymen shall at length advance,
Led on by Beauty in the rural dance;
'Till, in succession sweet, as time glides on,
The bliss descends enlarg'd from sire to son.

O days devoutly wish'd, when hinds shall feel
A generous passion for the public weal;
When uncorrupted and toil-harden'd trains,
Shall form an army of embattl'd swains;

When—should their country call them to the field,
 The scythe and sickle to the sword shall yield;
 When soaring high above their humble lot,
 Each youth shall rise a patriot of the cot;
 Confess, *unforc'd*, the love-excited glow—
 A Cincinnatus from the British plough.
 From the lorn shed that now a ruin lies,
 When other Duncans, Nelsons, shall arise,
 A brave, intrepid, voluntary band,
 Patient to till, and bold to guard the land.

And ah! MORE fondly wish'd! the blissful hours,
 When laurel'd labour shall devote his pow'rs
 To every smiling art; when war is o'er,
 And the fell trumpet asks his aid no more;
 * When PEACE shall spread *her* conquests o'er the land,
 And wash the blood-spots from Britannia's hand;
 When youth and age shall swell the tidings round,
 And nought but PEACE and PLENTY's horn resound!

And hark! those blissful hours at length appear,
 That burst extatic, speaks the cherub near;

* See prefixed Advertisement following the Preface.

From heav'n she comes, her blessings to impart,
And twine her olive round each Briton's heart ;
Nor Britons only, but the nations wide,
Whom furious enmities no more divide ;
Soft'ning to social leagues, the wreath shall share,
And earth's remotest bounds the joy declare :
While he the kingly Father ! gracious bends, (*u*)
To hail what heav'n by its best angel sends.

And thou, the KING OF KINGS ! O pow'r divine,
As thine the harvest, be the homage thine !
Thine all the bounties of the laughing mead,
The suns that ripen, and the dews that feed ;
Thine the favonian winds that save the grain,
And thine the show'rs that saturate the plain ;
And O from THEE, now speeds the SERAPH DOVE,
Her mission fraught with pity and with love.

Parent and sov'reign of th' obedient earth,
Who bid'st the myriad-bounties spring to birth ;
Who pour'st thy brooding spirit o'er the breeze,
The balmy herbage, and the fruitful trees ;

And with too vast a store (*w*) now crown'd the soil,
For fraud to cover, or for waste to spoil ;
Ah ! while we view the blessings of the year,
Chasten the smile of joy with virtue's tear ;
And as we take the heav'n-conferr'd supplies,
Let soft compassion in our bosoms rise ;
Since from thy hand unsparing we receive,
O teach our hearts unsparingly to give :
With souls uplifted while the knee we bend,
May grateful incense to THY Throne ascend,
And may thy suppliant find acceptance there,
As warm with pious love, they breathe a pray'r—
WITH THEE MAY EVERY THOUGHT BEGIN AND END,
O FIRST AND LAST ! CREATOR, FATHER, FRIEND !

END OF THE POEM.



And as we take the heav'n conferred supplies,
Let soft Compassion in our bosoms rise;
Since from thy hand unsparing we receive,
O! teach our hearts unsparingly to give!

Published by the Author, Feb'y 1803.

To the last, PRATT'S Poem of the Poet's or Cottage Pictures.

NOTES.

(a) THrice HAPPY ABBOT ! P. 12.

TWO miles from Tadcaster, on the left-hand side of the road to York, stands a beautiful little cottage, with a garden, that has long attracted the eye of the traveller. The slip of land is exactly a rood, inclosed by a cut quick-edge; and containing the cottage, fifteen apple-trees, one green gage, and three windfour plum-trees, two apricot-trees, several gooseberry and currant bushes, abundance of common vegetables, and three hives of bees; being all the apparent wealth of the possessor. The singular neatness and good order that marked every part of this little domain, and some circumstances respecting the owner, which had been mentioned by Dr. Burgh of York, made the benevolent Mr. Bernard anxious to obtain the history of the cottager and his family.—Here follows an abridgment of it:—

His name is Briton Abbot: his age now about seventy, his wife's nearly the same. At nine years old he had gone to work with a farmer; and being a steady careful lad, and a good labourer, particularly in what is called task-work, he had managed so well, that before he was 22 years of age, he had accumulated near 40*l.* He then married and took a little farm at 30*l.* a year; but before the end of the second year he found it prudent, or rather necessary, to quit it; having already exhausted, in his attempt to thrive upon it, almost all the little property that he had heaped together. He then fixed in a cottage at Poppleton; where, with two acres of land, and his common right, he kept two cows. Here he had resided very comfortably, as a labourer, for nine years, and had six children living, and his wife preparing to lie in of a seventh, when an inclosure of Poppleton took place; and the arrangements made in consequence of it, obliged him to seek for a new habitation, and other means of subsistence for his family.

He applied to Mr. Fairfax, and told him, that if he would let him have a little bit of ground by the road-side, "he would shew him the *fashions* on it." After inquiry into his character, he obtained of Mr. Fairfax the ground he now occupies; and with a little assistance from the neighbours, by the carriage of his materials, he built his present house; and planted the garden, and

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the hedge round it, which is a single row of quick, thirty-five years old, and without a flaw or defect. He says he cut it down six times successively when it was young. Mr. Fairfax was so much pleased with the progress of his work, and the extreme neatness of his place, that he told him he should be rent free. His answer deserves to be remembered:—"Now, Sir, you have a pleasure in seeing my cottage and garden neat: and why should not other squires have the same pleasure in seeing the cottages and gardens as nice about them? The poor would then be happy; and would love them, and the place where they lived: but now every little nook of land is to be let to the *great* farmers, and nothing left for the poor, but to go to the parish."

He has had seven children; six of whom attained to man's estate, and five are now living and thriving in the world. Britton Abbot says he now earns 12s. and sometimes 15s. and 18s. a week, by hoeing turnips by the piece, setting quick, and other talk-work: "but to be sure, (he added) *I have a grand character in all this country.*" He gets from his garden, annually, about 40 bushels of potatoes, besides other vegetables; and his fruit, in a good year, is worth from 3l. to 4l. a year. His wife occasionally goes out to work; she also spins at home, and takes care of his house and his garden. He says, they have lived very happy together for near fifty years.—To this account, it may be needless to add, that neither he, nor any part of his family, has ever had occasion to apply for parochial relief.

Though Mr. Bernard's visit was unexpected, and Britton at the latter end of his Saturday's work, his clothes were neat and sufficiently clean; his countenance was healthy and open; he was a little lame in one leg, the consequence of exposure to wet and weather. He said he had always worked hard and well; but he would not deny but that he had loved a mug of good ale when he could get it. When told the object in inquiring after him, was in order that other poor persons might have cottages and gardens as neat as his, and that he must tell *all his secret*—how it was to be done; he seemed extremely pleased, and very much affected; he said, "nothing would make poor folks more happy, than finding *that great folks thought of them*:" that he wished every poor man had as comfortable a home as his own; not but that he believed there might be *a few trifling fellows* who would not do good in it.

It is with good reason the worthy author of this report has said, in some annexed observations, that the history of Britton Abbot appears to merit attention. At the time of the inclosure at Poppleton, when he had six young children living, and his wife preparing to lie in of the seventh, his whole little system of economy and arrangement was at once destroyed; his house, his garden, his field, taken from him; and all his sources of wealth dried up. With less success in his application for the rood of land, the spot in which his industry was to be exerted, and (in justice to him it must be added) with less energy than he possessed, he might have gone with his family into a workhouse; and, from that hour, have become a burthen to the public, instead of being one of its most useful members. Observe for a moment the effects of his well-directed industry. Without any parochial aid, he has raised six of his seven children to a state of maturity, and has placed them out respectably and comfortably in the world. Five of them are now living, in the middle period of life; and he continues, at the age of seventy or upwards, a good working labourer; happy in his own industry and good management, in the beauty and comfort of his cottage, and in the extreme fertility of his garden.

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And fortunate would be the introduction of these simple annals of Britton Abbot in this place, if they should tend to obtain for the labourer encouragement to imitate the energy of his industry, Of the different modes of aiding and animating the poor, none would have more tendency to raise them above the want of parochial aid, than that of enabling them progressively to follow his example, in such a manner, that the most deserving might in their turn become the owners of comfortable cottages and productive gardens; a measure which seems to be peculiarly called for by the present condition of the dwellings of the poor. It is a melancholy fact that, in most parts of England*, their habitations are not only comfortable and devoid of accommodation, but insufficient in number; and that honest and industrious families are frequently driven into the work-house, merely for the want of cottages in their parish.

If the custom of setting apart ground for them to build upon, were to obtain generally, and in a manner to induce and enable them to take the benefit of it, it would assist in gradually correcting this national and increasing evil, and in supplying that useful class of men with proper habitations. It would have other very important effects. It would diminish the calls for parochial relief; it would encourage and improve the good habits of the poor; it would attach them to their parishes, and give them an increased interest and share in the property and prosperity of their country. The land required for each cottage and garden need not be more than a rood; the value of which would bear no possible comparison to that of the industry to be employed upon it. The quarter of an acre that Britton Abbot inclosed, was not worth a shilling a year. It now contains a good house and a garden, abounding in fruit, vegetables, and almost every thing that constitutes the wealth of the cottager. In such inclosures, the benefit to the country, and to the individuals of the parish, would far surpass any petty sacrifice of land to be required. FIVE UNSIGHTLY, UNPROFITABLE ACRES OF WASTE GROUND WOULD AFFORD HABITATION AND COMFORT TO TWENTY SUCH FAMILIES AS BRITTON ABBOT'S.

(b) AND FAIRFAX HAIL HO THEE, P. 13.

Mr. Fairfax was Britton Abbot's landlord.

(c) BLEST WHO LIKE THEE, O CARRINGTON, P. 14.

In the parish of Humberston, near Grimsby, there are thirteen cottagers, every one of whom has one cow with the means of keeping her, and some of them have more. The whole of the parish is the property of Lord Carrington. The land on which the cottages stand, with the little paddocks and gardens adjoining, contains in the whole about sixteen acres. Besides this, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the village, there are about sixty acres of land appropriated to the use of the cottagers. This land is divided into two plats; one of which is pasture for the cows in summer, and the other is kept as meadow land to provide hay for them in the winter. Each cottager knows his own piece of meadow land, and he lays upon it all the manure which he can obtain, in order that he may have the more hay. When one of the two plats of ground

* There are some few parts of England, especially in the northern counties, where the habitations of the poor are very comfortable. The author of the Poem has been in some measure relieved from the misery of the general cottage poor, in a wide survey of the country, by observing a number of comfortable dwellings, with appropriate gardens, orchards, &c. in different parts of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, particularly in the neighbourhood of Tewkesbury; but, alas! no cow, no pig.

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has been mown for two or three years, it is then converted into the summer pasture, and the other is used as meadow land; by which means no part of the land occupied by the cottagers is injured by constant mowing.

The cottagers are *independent* of the greater farmers; holding their cottages and lands directly of Lord Carrington, and not as undertenants. This gives them a degree of respectability which they would not otherwise possess. The rent, which they pay for their land, is below the farmer's rent; but it is certain that, in the greatest part of this kingdom, the cottager would rejoice at being permitted to pay the utmost value given by the farmers, for as much land as would keep a cow, if he could obtain it at that price.

There is no public-house at Humberston, nor do the parishioners desire one; and on this account there are no cockfights or gaming within the parish, nor any drunken meetings for the purpose of settling the parish rates. The poor-rates in the parish of Humberston, which include the charges for the families of the militia, never amount to more than nine-pence or ten-pence in the pound in the rental, and generally are under six-pence.

The reduction of the poor-rates, the increase of the comforts, and the improvement of the religious and moral habits of the poor, in the parish of Humberston, may be fairly ascribed to the circumstances above stated. Exclusive of the benevolence and charity of thus adding to the comforts of the poor, advantages of the utmost importance must be derived from such a system by the land owners and farmers themselves. It is essential to every farmer, that there should be a sufficient number of labourers in his neighbourhood, to enable him to occupy his land to the greatest advantage; otherwise he cannot afford to pay a fair and full rent for his land, and manage his farm in a manner beneficial to himself and to his landlord. Those labourers* who have no local advantage of situation, no tie of property, nor any appropriate benefit to attach them to a peculiar spot, are inclined to wander up and down a country, without any fixed connexion; and are always ready to change their employer for a trifling advance in their wages: whereas those cottagers, who have the advantages of property, who possess a cow, and rent a little ground, are the persons on whose assistance the farmer may depend in the time of necessity, and on whose honesty and ability he may implicitly rely.

Where cottagers, however, occupy *arable* land, it is very rarely of advantage to them, and generally a prejudice to the estate. The expence of keeping a team swallows up all the profit of a small quantity of arable land; and if the cottager depends on hiring horses and farming utensils, in order to work his land, the expence of them, and the occasional loss from the uncertainty of obtaining them when they are most wanted, will be more than the profits of his land will bear.

The cottager, who rents arable land, will seldom labour for other people; but will waste a great deal of his time to little benefit to himself. Much of his labour will be unproductive, because misapplied. From want of knowledge as a farmer, or from the press of necessity, he will cross-crop his ground; or, in other words, repeat his crops, till it becomes exhausted and foul, and incapable of any produce at all; and then he will complain that the land is bad and dear, and will find himself in a situation inferior to that of the labourer who has not the advantage of any land at all.

* And very many are now obliged to walk from their beds in a village several miles to and from their work every morning and evening.

They would thrive more, and enjoy greater comfort, with the means of keeping two or three cows each, than with three times their present quantity of arable land; but it would be a greater mortification to them to be deprived of it, than their landlord is disposed to inflict. If you give a cottager a garden, and grafs land on which to keep two cows, and he has ability and prudence to manage them, he will have comfort, and a considerable degree of affluence: but if you add a few acres of arable land, and make a little farmer of him, he will always be in poverty and distress.

It may not be improper to mention here, that on Lord Carrington's estate at Wintringham in Lincolnshire, there is a friendly society, one great object of which is the assisting of the cottager, in case of the loss of his cow. Every member pays a penny a week, for the purpose of raising a fund for the assistance of any cottager of the society, who may lose his cow, and be unable to buy another, or for any similar relief. Lord Carrington is a member of this club. The subscription of the landlord gives credit and support to the institution; and if, from particular circumstances, more money is wanted at times than the funds of the society will produce, the landlord is looked up to, and not in vain, for extraordinary assistance.

Communicated by THOMAS THOMPSON, Esq.

(d) LO! AS THE FAINTING LABOURER—P. 19.

OF this kind have several affecting instances happened in the course of the late season, particularly of two young men of Worcestershire, who were worn out with want, even as if it had been decay of age, and died in fruitless efforts to prevent it. I saw the grave of one of these at the village of Powick near Worcester. Indeed, the famine-smitten looks and figures of the peasantry, a very little time before harvest, were piteous to behold. The young women appeared, especially if mothers, to be old and haggard at thirty, and the men in the last stages of consumption. There was not only a great deal of mother shrewd wit and poignant satire, but an equal degree of truth, in the following remark of one countryman to another, within my hearing. "For my part," said he, "I can't but think what sort of a supply there is to be for our army and navy, when we, *grown-up scare-crows*, are gone to the worms; not that our skinny carcasses are now much worth having;—bad times when we live till we are not fit for worm's-meat; why do but look at the bits of things, the boys of poor folk, are now-a-days. They'll never come to any thing, even worth powder and shot; and, for the matter of that, the girls are no better. I don't expect one out of a dozen will ever make a mother; so I suppose there will be *a stop put to us all*. Well, that may be for the better; for it is as good not to be born at all, as to come into the world to work, and be starved into the bargain."

(e) WHEN SHEER UNDESSING—P. 21.

THE present short, tall-boy, shooting-jackets of the men, and the close, all-white, shroud-looking, ghostly chemise undresses of the ladies, who seem to glide like spectres, with their shrouds wrapt tight about their forms, sufficiently justify this expression.

(f) WHERE HIGH-BORN LUCIUS—P. 25.

THE long lost, but still lamented person, whose misfortunes are here sketched under the name of Lucius, is but one out of a multitude, suffering similar effects from similar causes; and happy

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may that reader account himself, if he has at all mixed with the world, whose memory does not furnish him with an instance but too like the fate of this unfortunate gentleman.

(g) BUT SEE THE RURAL BANKS! P. 55.

A very ingenious friend, to whom the youth of the country in particular, and the public in general, are under various obligations, Dr. MAJOR, has justly observed, in a sensible letter addressed to the Author of the Poem, in the second volume of *Gleanings in England*, in a note at page 288, that the facility with which farmers raise money on every emergency, by means of the country banks, renders the latter a nuisance to the public, however lucrative they may be to individuals. The wealthy farmer shuts up his barns till corn has reached the price he wishes, gives his note to the banker, and obtains what paper-currency he pleases to pay his rent. Those who cultivate the earth ought to be in comfortable circumstances, but if they GENERALLY become too rich, monopolies and other baneful consequences are the certain result. Whatever air of ridicule may appear to be thrown over Rural Banks, in the Poem, persons at all conversant in the country, will bear witness to the author's having adhered to literal facts; and a farther confirmation of the pernicious tendency of these money-shops, or rather paper-manufactories, may be seen in an article of the report of the Secret Committee, lately appointed to examine into the causes of the high prices of bread and other provisions.—“Thirdly, the great increase of the country banks, and the inundation of their paper, by which the farmer and the grazier are enabled to raise an artificial capital on the credit of their crop or stock, and thereby to feed the market as suits their avarice or convenience.”

(h) COMPULSION'S CRUEL SYSTEM—P. 61.

Truly has it been said, there is no law that can enforce industry; it may be encouraged, and great good will result from it; but it can never be effected by compulsion.

“Much more can be done by rewards than punishment, says an * able advocate for the poor, and the code of poor laws at present holds out nothing but punishment; departing far from the principles of Divine retribution, which while it threatens with tremendous punishment the bad, offers eternal rewards to the deserving.”

(i) THE WORKHOUSE TOO! P. 67.

Mr. Parry says, with but too much truth, that “in general *workhouses* are very improperly so called; being mostly filled with aged and infirm poor, who are considered as past work; or with idle profligate wretches, whom the overseers suffer to live in filth and inactivity, rather than complain to a magistrate to have them compelled to labour, or than to offer them any employment, whereby a part of their maintenance might be obtained.

“This state of the workhouse being known throughout the parish, the honest and industrious labourer, who has brought up a large family with credit, and who from misfortune is poor, and from age past his labour, will rather submit to be half starved, than take up his abode amidst such wretchedness and profligacy; although he knows the overseer will give him no relief out

* Thomas Ruggles, Esq.

of the house. This, I am sorry to say, I have found to be the case; and in one instance, upon hearing such a declaration from a poor man, a gentleman, who acted in the same division as myself, went with me unexpectedly to visit a parish workhouse; where we found men, women, and children, of different families crowded together, nineteen persons in two rooms of twelve feet square, and little more than six feet high."

And Mr. RUGGLES, in his "History of the Poor," a work in every point of view amiable, and generally well sustained by arguments, says, "his necessary attention to the duties of a magistrate, together with compassion for the distresses of his poor neighbours, particularly for those who were employed in daily labour on his farm; had occasioned him to visit, at times, the sick cottager, and the miserable pauper in a parish *workhouse*; the situation of the first, whose narrow tenement forbade the possibility of separating the sick from the well, the parent from the children, or children themselves from each other; that miserable œconomy in fitting up the cottage, which too generally has denied the only bed-room, either a fire place, or a casement window to ventilate the air; the noise of querulous children; the stench of confined air, rendered epidemic by morbid effluvia; the vermin too frequently swarming on the bodies and rags of the wretched inhabitants; all these causes acting together procrustinate affliction, prevent a return of health, and indicate a depth of misery, which hard labour and industry ought not in sickness to be liable to endure; neither did the parish workhouse, the last sad refuge of miserable indigence, offer a less disagreeable spectacle; the want of room, and the bad management of that which they possess, occasion similar inconveniences; the cloaths, or rather the covering of the inhabitants; the improprieties arising from the two sexes of all ages, and dispositions, long kept together; the ignorance and filth the children are brought up in; and the general spirit of rigid œconomy which the contracting master of the workhouse practices, as well in diet as in cloathing, lodging, and cleanliness, to scrape from misery, as soon as possible, a property which may enable him to retire from his disagreeable avocation, give propriety to the opinion and expression—that a parish workhouse is a parish bug bear to frighten distresses from applying for relief.

(k) SUCH WAS THY BOUNTY, WAY—P. 77.

In the year 1799, a tenant of this gentlemans, at Hasketon in the county of Suffolk, died, leaving a widow, and fourteen children, the eldest of which was a girl, under fourteen years of age. He had held under him fourteen acres of pasture land, in four inclosures, at a moderate rent of 13l. a year; and had kept two cows, which, with a very little furniture and clothing, was all the property that devolved, upon his death, to his widow and children.

The directors of the house of industry, upon being made acquainted with the situation of the family, immediately agreed to relieve the widow, by taking her seven youngest children into the house. This was proposed to her; but, with great agitation of mind, she refused to part with any of her children. She said, she would rather die in working to maintain them, or go herself with all of them into the house, and there work for them, than either part with them all, or suffer any partiality to be shewn to any of them. She then declared, that if her landlord would continue her in the farm, as she called it, she would undertake to maintain and bring up all her fourteen children, without any parochial assistance.

She persisted in her resolution; and being a strong woman about forty-five years old, was told she should continue the tenant, and hold it the first year rent free. This she accepted with much thankfulness. At the same time, though without her knowledge, Mr. Way directed his receiver not to

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call upon her at all for her rent; conceiving, that it would be a great thing if she could support so large a family, even with that indulgence.

The result, however, was that with the benefit of her two cows, and of the land, she exerted herself so as to bring up all her children; twelve of whom she placed out in service, continuing to pay her rent regularly of her own accord, every year after the first.—She carried part of the milk of her two cows, together with the cream and butter, every day to sell at Woodbridge, a market town two miles off, and brought back bread and other necessaries; with which, and with her skim-milk, butter milk, &c. she supported her family. The eldest girls took care of the rest while the mother was gone to Woodbridge; and by degrees, as they grew up, the children went into the service of the neighbouring farmers.

The widow at length came and informed her worthy landlord, that all her children, except the two youngest, were able to get their own living, and that she had taken up the employment of a nurse, which was a less laborious situation, and at the same time would enable her to provide for the two remaining children, who indeed could now almost maintain themselves. She therefore gave up the land, expressing great gratitude for the enjoyment of it, which had afforded her the means of supporting her family, under a calamity, which must otherwise have driven both her and her children into a workhouse.

Mr. Way remarks justly, that this is an extraordinary instance of what maternal affection, assisted by a little kindness and encouragement, will do. To separate the children of the poor from their parents, is indeed equally impolitic and unkind. It destroys the energy of the parent, and the affections and principles of the child.—Man is a creature of wants. From them are derived all our exertions. On the necessity of the infant is founded the affection of the mother; and among the poor, (excepted those cases where parental affection may be chilled and enfeebled by extreme depression of circumstances)—but generally, among the poor where that necessity exists in the greatest force, natural affection is the strongest.

The supplying of cottagers with cows, and with the means of feeding them, will tend to diminish the calls for parochial relief; and to render unnecessary that barbarous system, of removing the child from its natural and most affectionate guardians.—The year's rent remitted, and the land confided to this poor widow, not only enabled her to support and educate her children at home, but was the means of saving the parish a very considerable expence; as the reception and feeding and clothing of the seven youngest children, at an expence of hardly less than seventy pounds a year, would probably have been followed by nearly an equal expence with the widow and the other children. Besides this, the encouragement of industry and good management among the poor in their cottages, and assisting them in their endeavours to thrive, will contribute to the increase of a hardy and industrious race of people; and will afford a supply to our markets of eggs, butter, poultry, pigs, garden-stuff, and almost every article of life; tending to lower the price of provisions, to prevent monopoly, to enrich the country, and to make it powerful both in people and produce, to a degree beyond all calculation.

It is with heart-felt pleasure I subjoin to this interesting fact, a most pleasing corroborant with which I am furnished by a very amiable and intelligent friend, whose practical benevolence, within his sphere of action, is a constant illustration of his theory; Mr. Swan, of Wolvercot:—

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" I have great pleasure in furnishing you with a brief history of Joseph Smith, who is one of the instances which almost every village affords, of the incalculable advantages that would arise from the allotment of a small portion of ground to every cottage. This man rents of me an acre of meadow which, he has held for twenty years; without this, he probably at this time, would have been as penniless and as burthenome as most of the neighbouring labourers. He has reared eight children, and buried three, has never received the smallest parochial assistance, and is now possessed of live stock worth at least 70l. and has lately purchased the cottage he lives in, and the one adjoining it. He keeps, with his meadow and the common, two hardy cows, rears a calf or two every year, and has a good stock of poultry and pigs, supplied with food by the refuse of his dairy and well-managed garden. Superficial reasoners imagine a man's having these comforts about him, would spoil him as a labourer, of which I never could find an instance; this man is the most constant and steady workman in the parish, and in the ten years I have lived here, has never lost a day's work from drunkenness, idleness, or the hindrance of his own little concerns, to which his evenings and mornings, and a part of his wife's time are devoted. His cows are supported, part of the hard winters, at a very small expence, in a straw-yard. I have never conversed with a poor man, who had a pig in his sty, without finding him a patriot.

(1) THE NOBLE WINCHELSEA. P. 79.

It is with sincere regret, that I find myself, in this instance, under the necessity, from want of room and time, to give only in very partial abridgment, the arguments and sentiments of this amiable nobleman on this momentous subject. The facts which follow, however, will serve as a confirmation of my assertions on the same subject:—

" Upon my estate in the county of Rutland," says the earl, " there are from seventy to eighty labourers, who keep from one to four cows each. I have always heard that they are hard-working industrious men. They manage their land well, and pay their rent very regularly; which has more and more confirmed me in the opinion, that nothing is so beneficial both to them and to the land owners, as their having land to be occupied either for the keeping of cows, or as gardens, according to circumstances."

By means of these advantages, his Lordship's labourers and their families live better, and are consequently more fit to endure labour; they are more contented, and more attached to their situation, and acquire a sort of independence, which makes them set a higher *value upon their character*. " In the neighbourhood in which I live," adds his lordship, " men so circumstanced, are almost always considered as the most to be depended upon and trusted." The possessing of a little property certainly gives a spur to industry; as a proof of this, it has almost always happened, that when a labourer has obtained a cow, and land sufficient to maintain her, the first thing he has thought of has been, how he could save money enough to buy *another*; and the earl has almost always had applications for more land from those people so circumstanced.

As to the wickedness and profligacy which has been assigned by Messrs. *Townsend* and *Gilbert*, amongst their four grand causes of the increase of the poor, and of the expenses of maintaining them; although I agree with *Mr. Hewlett* in his examination of these causes, that this complaint of their vices is not equal to their actual distress—I must observe, that if there be really

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more depravity than formerly in the poorer classes, it is because those who have them in subjection, have starved in their hearts that feeling of relative honour and independence, as Fathers, Husbands, Englishmen, and Human Beings, which are the incentives and supports of every thing that goes to *character*; till, having as it were, no longer any terms to keep with that society of which they have been treated as the *scum* and *outcasts*, they *despairingly* give themselves up to what I must strongly coincide with Mr. Hewlett, *has been the consequence* of their *poverty*; and thus the famine may be said to have devoured their *souls as well as bodies*. I speak merely of such as *are* abandoned; but, make even those as comfortable on the same principle of comfort as they were a few years ago, and I have not a doubt, but many of the most idle and dissolute, who now *live* at the *public* charge, would be reclaimed, and return to their homes, preferring their own labours to their present sinecures.

Those very small spots of a few square yards, which we sometimes see near cottages, can hardly be called gardens. There should be as much as will produce all the garden stuff that the family consumes, and enough for a pig, with the addition of a little meal. Lord Winchelsea is of opinion, they ought to pay the same rent that a farmer would pay for the land, and no more. It frequently happens, that a labourer lives in a house at twenty or thirty shillings a year rent, which he is unable to pay, to which, if a garden of a rood was added, for which he would have to pay five or ten shillings a year more, that he would be enabled, by the profit he would derive from the garden, to pay the rent of the house, &c. with great *advantage* to himself.

Whoever travels through the midland counties, and will take the trouble of enquiring, will generally receive for answer, that formerly there were a great many cottagers who kept cows, but that the land is now thrown to the farmers; and if he inquires still further, he will find, that, in those parishes, the poor's rates have increased in an amazing degree, more than according to the average rise throughout England. It is to be hoped, that as the quantity of land required for gardens is very small, it will not excite the jealousy of the farmers.

The *S. eret* Committee lately appointed, were of opinion, that if the waste lands were thrown into cultivation, a sufficient supply of corn would be produced so, as greatly to supersede the necessity of importation; and if in addition thereto, a small portion of land *was allotted to each cottager*, he would be enabled to cultivate the same at his leisure, and raise a sufficient supply of potatoes and other vegetables for the consumption of his family, by which the condition of the industrious poor would be very considerably ameliorated.

(m) AND GENEROUS WARWICK, P. 79.

The name and conduct of this nobleman is mentioned with due honour, in a former note. In addition to which, the tribute offered to the late Sir Christopher Sykes so immediately applies to his lordship, that I cannot but adopt it:—"The memorial of his honesty and worth, will grow with time itself." Whoever surveys Warwick castle, with its extensive domains, and calls to mind *what they were*, and *sees what they are*, will have cause to remember the name of Warwick, who has realized the antient inscription as truly as Sir Christopher, and *more truly* than he, for whom it was written.

" Si quæras monumentum, circumspice."

" If you ask for my monument, look around you."

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But a memorial yet more honourable to the earl, is beyond the reach of general observation; being reared in the hearts of unnumbered persons, who would have been poor, idle, and wretched, had he not made them rich, industrious, and happy, by wholesome and constant employment. In a word, the only enemies of this nobleman, are those who have been made such by his appeals in favour of the indigent; but on such foes is he not to be congratulated?

(u) AND SACRED GLASSE—P. 80.

This valuable member of society, having long observed, that there is scarcely any article of life, in respect to which the poor are under greater difficulties, or for the supply of which they have stronger temptations to dishonest practices, than that of fuel, he was induced, in the parish of Greenford in Middlesex, and in that of Wanstead in Essex, to lay in a certain quantity of coals every summer, when they were to be purchased at a moderate price, perhaps at two guineas a chaldron at the wharf, and to have them brought in his own carts from the water side. As soon as the winter sets in, the poor have liberty to apply for any quantity, not less at one time than half a bushel, nor more than a bushel, every monday in the afternoon; for which the price is one shilling a bushel, being equal to one pound sixteen shillings per chaldron. They were expected to bring ready money; and they brought it with great cheerfulness, as they were very sensible of the benefit of it.—What were sold at the shops was of an inferior sort; the price one shilling and six-pence per bushel.

The trouble and expence of setting up a coal shop, as Dr. G. observes, in any village, is trifling; and no law will ever be made against wood stealing, that will so much operate to prevent it, as such a provision for the benefit of the poor.

I cannot withhold from the reader, the account which this philanthropist has given of the advantage of a cottager keeping a pig; an object of the greatest importance to the poor:—

“JAMES BRAMSGROVE, a farmer's labourer at Greenford, in Middlesex, had saved by his industry the sum of four guineas. With this he purchased a hog, which he put up to fatten in the beginning of April last. In the course of the fattening, he used 3 quarters and a half of beans, and 7 bushels of pease, with which he had been supplied, chiefly upon credit, by his master and his neighbours.—He has a wife and 5 children; the 2 eldest, girls; one 12 years old, the other four something younger. He, his wife, and his two girls, during the last harvest, earned two guineas a week, and in one week the sum of 2l. 11s. so that he has continued to maintain his family, and has paid off all that was due from him for beans and pease.—He has since killed his hog, at Michaelmas; the weight was 64 stone 3lb.: part of it he sold at 7½d. per pound, and the rest he has reserved for the use of his own family. Estimating the whole at 7½d. per pound, the value of the hog would have been above 16l.; but, as what he sold consisted of prime pieces, some deduction ought to be made on that account.”

Where a cottager possesses any property, when he has a garden, a pig, or a cow, his advantage is to be estimated, not merely by the pecuniary profit produced, but by the superior tone of industry and economy which he acquires. In the instance of James Bramsgrove and his family, the prospect of increased comfort, and of improved means of subsistence, gave an incentive and a pleasure to all their labour and exertions, during the harvest. Perhaps it may be needless to observe, that habits of application and good conduct, when once acquired and enjoyed, continue in almost every instance, through life, a blessing to the possessor; and that where the cottager has acquired at

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home a pleasurable object of industry, to which his hopes and wishes are directed, it has the effect of attaching him to his situation, of augmenting his energy, and of reconciling him to a life of labour and hardship.

(o) WHILE DURHAM, &c. P. 80.

In the year 1794, a village shop was opened at Mongewell, in Oxfordshire, under the auspices of this benevolent prelate, for the benefit of the poor of that and three small adjoining parishes. A quantity of such articles of consumption as they use, as bacon, cheese, candles, soap, and salt, was procured from the wholesale dealers, to be sold at prime cost, and for ready money. They were restricted in their purchases to the supposed weekly demand of their families. This plan was adopted under the apparent inconvenience, of not having a more proper person to sell the several commodities, than an *infirm old man, unable to read or write*. He received the articles that were wanted for the week; and it has appeared by his receipts at the close of it, that he has been correct. Since the commencement to the present time, there has been no reason to regret his want of scholarship: a proof how very easy it must be to procure in every village, a person equal to the task. As he has parish pay, and his house-rent is discharged, he is perfectly contented with his salary of one shilling per week, having also the common benefit of the shop.

From the above statement it appears that, taking all the articles together sold at the Mongewell shop, there was a saving to the poor of twenty-one per cent, in the supply of several of the most important articles of life.—Many in every parish, would lend their assistance to carry this plan into execution, if it were *known* that the rates would be lowered, at the same time that the poor would be benefited.

The comforts of the poor may thus be promoted, by bringing within their reach the articles of life, which they chiefly want, of the best quality, and at the cheapest rate. Their morals will also be improved, by the removal of an inducement to frequent the alehouse. As their time will not be mispent, their means also will be increased. The parish rates will be lessened, even if the articles were sold without profit; for the labourer will be enabled to purchase clothing for his family *without other assistance*. The farmer will gain, by keeping his servants regularly at their work, and by taking from the younger of them, those examples of bad economy and dissolute conduct, which tend to lead them into the same evil habits.

(p) VAUNTING HE HOLDS HIS THOUSAND ACRES CLEAR. P. 80.

THE Secret Committee have very justly determined—That, there is a too considerable consolidation and consequent enlargement of farms, whereby a less produce of various articles of provision, such as poultry and pigs, takes place, they being now deemed too unimportant for the *opulent farmer* to attend to, who is also enabled to give a higher rent than the person occupying a small farm, on account of the reduced proportionate expence of cultivation; and instead of bringing his produce to market, as was formerly the custom, in order to discharge his rents, he is enabled to withhold it, and the character of the farmer is lost in that of the speculator and monopolist, to the great injury of the public.

In confirmation of this report, I have to observe, that at this very time, no less than sixteen farms in consolidation are occupied by a man near the Devizes, who formerly took a sixteenth

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share, and maintained himself and his family in credit and comfort; as did the other fifteen, who are now dispersed in poor houses, dwindled into day-labourers, with grief aggravating toil, or wholly annihilated.

Another instance occurs, of a farmer holding what was formerly rented by nine, in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham; a third example in the parish of Winchcomb, of a person occupying 27 small farms consolidated into one—similar causes producing similar effects. Indeed the like examples are obvious to every traveller, who is seriously intent upon rural affairs.

The friend to whom I am indebted for the judicious remarks on note *g*, respecting country banks, has so ably argued on this point, that I shall leave some of his observations with the reader:—"Various are the instances, within my own knowledge," says this well-instructed writer, "of twelve farms, which once supported as many families in credit, having been thrown into three or four upon an inclosure, and in many cases without one. I do not, however, from hence, blame inclosures; the largeness of farms is certainly not necessarily connected with this mode of improvement, which might be made productive of numerous benefits to all; but arises from a narrow policy in the land-owners; an impolitic saving of expences in buildings and repairs, with somewhat less trouble to the steward in collecting the rents; while, for such paltry objects, the risk is run of ultimately endangering the safety of all property, and the very stability of the state itself.

"If three men monopolize the land which maintained and employed twelve before, nine of course and their families must turn day-labourers, or manufacturers, and eventually become chargeable to the parish. Does the farmer or the land-owner in reality pay the poor's rates? the latter most assuredly; for, in proportion to the burdens and outgoings will be the rent he receives. Will the labourer or manufacturer, on the other hand, feel the same permanent and warm attachment to his country, as he who occupies a portion of land, however small, cultivates it with his own hands, and for his own emolument; and after the labours of the day, sits down with a happy family, at a distance indeed from luxury, but above dependence, and remote from squalid poverty? To every feeling heart, every enlarged capacity, I appeal for the solution of this question; and I shall likewise propose another, if possible, of still greater moment to the public:—Will three farmers raise as much marketable produce as twelve would do? Was it not formerly owing to the small occupiers of land, that many of the necessaries and comforts of life were to be procured in such abundance, and sold at such a moderate rate? The opulent farmer may, indeed, raise enough to secure an ample profit to himself, after bringing up his family in a luxurious manner; but as his wealth and credit enables him to keep back his stock of corn or other articles of consumption on every emergency; so he will be cautious of overstocking the market at all times; because, if *one* load of wheat can be made to fetch the price of *two*, he knows that he has all the labour and expence of producing the surplus without any compensation. Hence the evils of which the poor most justly complain, and which even the rich, who are not connected with agriculture, feel in the severest degree. Hence the enhanced expence of living, the increased wages of labourers and manufacturers, which are still, however, inadequate to their wants, and all those scenes of misery, those expressions of dissatisfaction, those popular tumults, which humanity can neither repress with severity, nor policy suffer to proceed."

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In close of this very important part of the subject, I shall subjoin the subsequent corroborating sentiments submitted by Mr. Davis to the consideration of the * Board of Agriculture.

“As to the monopoly of farms, it is a common but narrow policy in land-owners to throw several small bargains into one, in order to save some expence in buildings. It is seldom seen that very large farms are cultivated to so great advantage as smaller ones; and besides, they naturally tend to encrease the poors rates, by rendering all labourers who cannot afford to be farmers, and *annihilating a very useful order of men, the small farmers*; whose attachment to their country must of course be greater while they continue masters of some property, in their flock of cattle or corn, than when, by being reduced to labourers, they are without possessions. Every lesser article of consumption, which was formerly brought to market by this description of men, is consequently raised, by diminishing the sources of its growth and produce; such articles being beneath the notice of an opulent farmer.”

(9) INTO TEN EQUAL PARTS. P. 81.

An illustrious example of what *may* be afforded by rich farmers, is the following curious anecdote, which is but too well known to all the good people of a town not a hundred miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. A knot of jolly fellows, chiefly farmers, assembled at the principal inn of that town, to pass a social day, in order to *avoid the expence*, as they gave out, of a public table at Warwick, during the *late race-week*. On this *plan of frugality* they sat soberly down, to the number of sixteen; and, that their *economy* might be the more conspicuous, they *kept it up* for three days successively; during which time they resolved, *nem. con.* (for the sake of *frugality*) to drink nothing but *champagne, claret, and burgundy*, for which they sent to all the cellars of the country, with a spirit truly honourable to themselves, and useful to society. And to give a farther zest to the treat, bank bills and other *paper* property, (the country bank paper makers supplying them so profusely with that article, as to make it mere *waste* paper) were soaked and sopped in the wine, like ruffs in chocolate. An atchievement which not only throw into the back-ground, the fact which the Earl of WARWICK stated to parliament last session, as to certain tenants mixing brandy with their wine, but brings into disrepute the notable exploit of the celebrated courtesan, who placed the compliment which she deemed inadequate to her favor, very delicately between a double slice of bread and butter, and, instead of pocketing, *swallowed* the affront. It cannot be doubted, but that future historians will add this sublime Stratfordian event to the wonders of Warwickshire; nothing of equal moment being upon record, since the days of the immortal Bard who had the honour to come into the world on the spot where these farmer-gentlemen narrowly escaped going out of it, *martyrs*—to claret and burgundy. O rare economy! and O rare farmer-gentlemen!

* With respect to the BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, while the greatest praise is due to the president for his indefatigable diligence in the execution of his plan, and yet more for the patriotism and philanthropy of his motive; as well as the most profound respect to very many of the liberal, noble, and disinterested auxiliaries, some acute observers, no way connected with public men or measures, but feeling an enlarged and enlightened wish for the promotion of every national improvement, have expressed their apprehensions to the Author of the Poem, that in this, as in most other grand national schemes for the improvement, glory, and happiness of an empire, not a few abuses have insinuated themselves, by no means to the corruption of the pure original principle, or to the dishonour of the conductors, or general patrons of the design; but, to the impediment of that *unqualified and unabated* good which might have been expected as the result of an institution so benevolent and expensive. This cursory remark is made by the Author, merely to put the principal persons, concerned in the publication, on their guard, to prevent their generous designs being in any degree obstructed by interested or ignorant, however plausible, communications.

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At the same time, I have very sincere pleasure in bearing testimony, to the unabated industry, and every sort of domestic care and housewifery, and proportionate charity, of not a few occupiers of *large farms*. In progress of my researches, it has sincerely gratified me to see, in different counties, those, who have rented from 500*l.* to 1000*l.* per annum, as unremitted in their household affairs, the wife in her business of the house and dairy, and the husband to his field-work, as if their daily subsistence was to arise from their daily labour. And their times of relaxation, as well as their modest habits of enjoying it, are to be considered only as just rewards, as well as beneficial reliefs, of such honourable diligence.

In respect to what has been said of gentlemen and lady-farmers, in the second Part of the Poem, the Author subscribes fully to the opinion of a Critic*, who observes, that “*any uneducated and vain man, who suddenly becomes rich, will be equally absurd; and perhaps, for one such character among farmers, twenty might, in these days, be found among merchants. But it is not either farming or merchandize, that makes such characters; they are produced by the strong operation of great prosperity upon weak and vulgar minds. The supposition that opulent farmers must of necessity be coxcombs, is just as sensible, as the supposition of a certain facetious senator, that farming clergymen are of course Trullibers.*”

Nevertheless, the instances within the Author's own knowledge, (and probably every country at least, and deliberate traveller can strengthen the assertion by similar examples) are sufficiently numerous to justify the descriptions, and a dozen such examples tend more perhaps to the degeneracy of manners, and corruption of that *principle of simplicity* in morals, which, without borrowing any ornaments from poets who have written on pastoral life, used to be a very few years back, the characterising feature of the British husbandman and his family. And their diverging from this graceful point of character, has robbed the country of a charm in the eyes of every *Lover of Nature*; while the political mischief which accompanies the change (for who can tell where a corruption of manners and morals begun will stop) is yet more deeply regretted by every *Lover of his Country*. As this Revolution, however, has been sudden, so, it is to be hoped may be the Reformation.

(r) A HOME THO' ROCKING—P. 84.

This influence of local attachment in all its wondrous varieties—its universality of magic, is described by Mr. POLEWHEEL, as acting with the force of a charm, even on the animal creation. The

* See British Critic, for August 1801, article 48, upon “*Observations on the enormous price of provisions, overgrown opulence of the farmer, &c. by a Kentish Clergyman.*” What this writer has said on the subjects, the Author of this Poem has been prevented from knowing, by his general absence from London, and other places, where political novelties of the press are to be seen; and, indeed, during the whole of his excursions and researches, he has rather been sedulous of acquiring ocular and oral evidence than any written accounts whatever; truly anxious to see how far the specific causes generally assigned were or were not founded on facts, and how far those causes operated, separately and severally, in producing effects; and lastly, how far they both admitted of practical remedies. The impressive power of poetry to recommend and to fix a fact in the memory, especially where the subject fastens on the affections, and the sincere glowing of his heart upon the occasion, induced him to offer his sentiments and arguments rather in *verse than prose*; calling in however the aid of the last, by way of auxiliary, to strengthen and confirm. No man who has the use of his senses will either recommend an *unqualified maximum*, or compare the harvest of the past with the present year; but neither can any man possibly form an idea of the extreme atrocities practised in the former, to render a *partially unkind season* ten thousand times worse, and thereby aggravate *particular scarcity into general famine*; but those who, with a warm love and honest diligence, have gone forth into various parts of the island in search of facts.

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British Muse may be proud of the following natural and powerful Illustrations in proof of this position:—

The wand'ring dove, amid pale wintry skies,
 Far off, remembers her accustom'd nest,
 And down the gloom, o'er many a long vale, flies,
 Till *there*, with weary wing, she sinks to rest ;
 The dog, exulting, scours wide woods, in quest
 Of his bemoan'd *home*, with broken chain ;
 The warrior horse, by foreign toil opprest,
 Quickens his eager pace, as, once again,
 He views the hoof-beat road, beside his pasture plain.

(s) SHALL PLEASED BEHOLD. P. 84.

Of the sort of ornamental cottages I have recommended as the best decorations a man of landed property can exhibit *near his residence*, it has been generally thought that the most complete are to be seen at Lord Penrhyn's, in Cheshire, whose cottages are disposed with great taste, and are adorned with surrounding clumps of planting, each having a pretty little plot of garden ground, and shrubbery in front, and some with honey-suckle and jessamine beautifully entwined round the porch and windows. The insides of these are equally delightful, with the outside being kept so excessively neat and clean, that it is a pleasure, says Mr. Beatson, to view them.

We may adopt the energetic language and sterling sense of Dr. PARR, though applied to another object of bounty:—"Surely, the pageantries of wealth hide their diminished glory, the splendour of military prowess fades away, the most gorgeous displays of imperial grandeur are quite eclipsed, upon the first dawn of such benevolence, rising, as the Prophet describes "the sun of righteousness, with healing in its wings." Such must be Lord Penrhyn's pleasure on raising, peopling, and patronizing his cottages.

If cottages, under such regulations as these, were more generally the taste, they would, it has been observed, be of great use and ornament to a country, and a real credit to every gentleman's residence; as, on the contrary, nothing can reflect greater disgrace upon him, than a shattered miserable hovel, at his gate, unfit for human creatures to inhabit. Upon encouragement like this, good tenants would never be wanting. Industry would meet with a reward, the poor-rates would necessarily be lightened, and population increased. A farm thus provided with such a sufficient number of labourers as might, at all times and seasons be depended upon, would be of more value on that account. The tenant of such farm would not be subject to pay exorbitant wages, as he otherwise must on particular occasions. He would not be obliged to court the vagrant, to lend him a precarious assistance, or to have recourse to towns, to pick up disorderly people. In summer, besides the usual business of haymaking, he might employ even the women, and children in weeding, and other usual business.

Almost every parish is, in a great measure, subject to some particular gentleman, who has sufficient power and influence over it, to correct the present grievance, and to set a better example. Such gentlemen should consider themselves as guardians of the poor, and attend to their accom-

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modation and happiness: it is their particular business, because they and their families have a lasting interest in the prosperity of the parish; the farmers only a temporary one.

The authenticity of the following circumstance, Mr. R. Davis, Topographer to his Majesty, asserted long since to be unquestionable. My information confirms that assertion. The most pleasing proofs of the good effects are seen at this day in the neighbourhood.

The commonable land belonging to a parish in Worcester-shire, which is situated very near to Tewkesbury, was inclosed about 22 years ago; and there was an allotment, containing 25 acres, set out for the use of such of the poor as rented less than £.10 a year, to be stocked in common. At that time there were about sixteen people on the parish books, some of whom had families. Previous to the inclosure there were some few cottages that had land let with them, to the amount of 6 or £.7 a year each. The occupiers of these cottages with land annexed to them, were remarkable for bringing up their families in a more neat and decent manner than those whose cottages were without land; and it was this circumstance, which induced the lord of the manor, (to whom almost the whole of the parish belonged) to lay a plot of land, from five to twelve acres (besides the common before-mentioned) to other of the cottages, and to add a small building, sufficient to contain a horse or a cow, and likewise to allow grafting stocks to raise orchards. In some instances, small sums of money were lent to these cottagers, for the purchase of a cow, a mare, or a pig.

The following good effects have been the consequence of this proceeding. It has not, in one instance, failed of giving an industrious turn, even to some who were before idle and profligate. Their attention in nursing up the young trees, has been so much beyond what a farmer, intent upon greater objects, can or will bestow, that the value of the orchards is increased to 40s. per acre, in land which was of less than half the value in its former state. And the poor rates have from this cause, fallen to 4d. in the pound, or less, there being only two (and those very old) people on the books at this time, whilst the adjoining parishes are assessed from 2s. 6d. to 5s. in the pound. These are labourers, and good ones; their little concerns are managed by their wives and children, with their own assistance after their day's work. Their stock consists of a cow, a yearling heifer, or a mare to breed (from which a colt at half a year old will fetch from 3 to £.5,) a sow, and thirty or forty geese. This, therefore, has been the means of bringing a supply of poultry and fruit to the market, increasing of population, and making the land produce *double the rent a farmer can afford to give.*

Lord BROWNLOW also, holding in pious memory the following rule of his father—"rather build two cottages than suffer one to be annihilated," has, in his new inclosures, and on his Lincolnshire estates, provided for all his *little* tenants, either by two cottagers pastures, one for hay, the other for pasture, alternately; or else has allotted them a close to the cottage; being persuaded that a little grass land, with a comfortable house, not only attaches the labourer to the spot, but interests him in the peace and welfare of his country.

(i) AND CAREFUL YOUTH. P. 85.

Mr. MORTON PITT, in his address to the landed interest, published in 1797, has justly remarked, that there are few parishes without several rough, encumbered, and uncultivated tracts of land, which might be converted into large gardens, and on which cottages might be erected, either by some of the poor themselves, to be held on lives, or at the expense of the parish, or of

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the proprietors of estates. Where there is no land uncultivated, other grounds, which can be most conveniently spared, should be allotted to them. Many young men, having saved a little money, would be very desirous of taking such spots of ground on leases for three lives, and of building cottages thereon. Every labourer possessing such property of his own, would consider himself as having a permanent stake in the country. The hope of improving their lot is the main spring of industry in all other stations of life. Would it not then be policy as well as humanity, to afford the agricultural poor the same opportunity? The wealth and greatness of this country has been attributed, not only to the spirit of enterprise of our merchants and manufacturers, but to the effect which the possession and the security of property, enjoyed under our free and excellent constitution, have on the minds of men. If this effect has been so salutary among other classes, why may not similar encouragement create the same energy among the cultivators of the land; and why should those alone remain in a dispirited, and distressed state?

The produce of a garden diminishes the consumption of bread, which is the most considerable article of a poor man's expenditure: it is an advantage wholly created by the cultivator's industry, at times when not otherwise engaged, and by that of his wife and children; and is therefore so much labour, or in other words riches, gained to the community; and the employment gives health and vigour to his children, inures them to fatigue, and trains them to industry. The value to him who receives the ground is immense, yet it is no loss to him who grants it. It procures the poor man comfort and plenty; and, by so doing, keeps within moderate bounds the wages of labour. Every man who is averse to raising the wages of labour in husbandry, should at least encourage the culture of gardens.

It has been calculated, that a parish containing three thousand acres of arable and pasture, in proportion to each other, may be cultivated by *one hundred families*, who would require, even on a large scale of cottage property, only twelve acres and a half of land to make them happy. This, at forty shillings an acre, would cost the parish only £.25 per annum, while in cabbages, carrots and potatoes it would produce more than £.300 a year, which produce would relieve the poor rates to the same amount at least. The West-India planters it seems, have adopted a plan somewhat similar to this.

In corroboration of these sentiments, the Rev. Mr. Townsend, of Pewsey in Wilts, states, on more than thirty years experience in one village, that the difference betwixt the cottagers who have a garden adjoining their habitations, and those who have no garden, is exceedingly striking. The former he noted to be in general sober, industrious and healthy, whilst the latter are too often drunken, lazy, vicious, and frequently diseased. The reason for this difference is obvious; because one fills up all his time with useful labour, whilst the other, for want of occupation, takes refuge in the ale-house, where he dissipates his scanty pittance, ruins his family, and destroys his own health.

(n) WHILE HE, THE KINGLY FATHER! GRACIOUS BENDS. P. 87.

The above line and its subsequent, while the author was breathing his wishes for Peace, stood thus—

While he, the kingly Father! gracious bends
From England's throne to hail the gracious ends—

because his majesty, being informed of the plan and object of *The Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor*, declared himself patron of it. The accomplishment of those wishes, has occasioned them to be moved from the passage preceding, and produced the alteration in the second line.

(w) AND WITH TOO VAST A STORE—P. 88.

Blessed be the Power, who, by the abundance of the present year, has, in some small degree, forced the tenantry into a general *acknowledgment* of that abundance; and as it were, *blamed* them into a temporary decrease in the price of wheat, but no ways proportioned to the increase of grain: yet, even this confession is made with the reluctance that hardened persons confess their sins, and begin a shew of reformation, after they are left without an excuse, tho' indeed, the public criminals in question, after being driven to every loop-hole, have at last found, or rather *made*, a small cranny, out of which, forsooth, they bring a limping apology, founded on a certain "*black*," they have discovered in the corn, owing to the few partial showers which they had previously supplicated, and which fell some weeks before the harvest. To this they tack another notable excuse, namely, That the ears were so plumped, and stood so thick, and remained so long uncut, owing to the scarcity of labourers which the army and navy had carried off—though by the bye, their own *famine* had, in a great measure disabled them from work,—that much of the corn, thus *deeply fanned*, was so *rotten-ripe*, it would not bear the sickle without dropping out of the overloaded ears upon the ground! Did not the subject call for a burst of *indignation*, it would be difficult to hear such bungling excuses without a burst of *laughter*.

The momentary fall of the bread, however extorted, is a most timely blessing to the poor; but unless care is taken by the higher powers, if any powers there are now in the country, higher than the *Sovereigns of the Soil*—a term, that where long leases has been given, by no means includes the owners of the land—unless the legislature, like another British lion will arouse, and put forth all its justice, all its strength, and all its compassion, to prevent a resumption of the nefarious, the demoniac practices that have been adopted; the present favourable, but only comparatively good change, in a few of the articles of prime necessity, must be considered but as a *reprieve* to a condemned man; or, rather as giving a few meals to poor wretches almost starving in their dungeon huts, who are nevertheless certain of a speedy execution.

Alas! this simile is but too correct as to effects, though widely differing as to causes. The really condemned criminals have forfeited the protection, though they may receive the mercy of the law; but those who, *like* criminals, have been left to fester in *their* condemned hole, their prison-suffering hovels, the horrors of a lingering untimely death, *with* Law, Justice and Mercy on their side!

The utmost care then must be taken to enable the *Poor* of every denomination, to keep the small advantages they have gained; to give permanency to a temporary good; and to make the staff, which by strength greater than their own, they have wrenched from the gripe of the giant, be literally the *STAFF OF LIFE*, to support them in sickness, to gladden them in health, even to their lives end.

No actual salvation of those sinews of the state, the *peasantry*, is to be hoped for, unless the nails and teeth of the giant, I have described, which according to the powerful expression

of a learned Judge in a late cause—" have been for some time, ³ *tearing out the hearts-blood of the land,*" are drawn and shortened. The redemption of that land, and of those who make it fruitful, can now be effected but by the interference of government, who must take care that the giant does not resume his strength.

The staff must remain as I have said in the hands of the Poor, and the † usurper must fall, like Lucifer—" never to rise again." I did not here intend any pun on the words—*rise and fall*, as applicable to bread; but as they have thus come accidentally together, they may perhaps be thought to assist the force of the allusion.

There cannot be the doubt of a moment, but that government, in their late patronage of the farmers, *intended* thereby, an effectual public service; and that ultimately, the comfort of the poor, entered into the strong measures then adopted; but ministers, like princes, seldom hear the *subtle* truth. They get it not even at the second or third, but often at the *fiftieth* hand; and, after all, it frequently comes to them, after passing through the polluted channels of avarice, interest, combination, and conspiracy; that, however fair and specious may be its form, it is frequently a mass of not only false, but *fool* report; and the higher orders are not seldom the victims of this misrepresentation; and the more honour and good faith a man has in his own disposition, the more liable he is to this species of *false witness against one's neighbour*.

The parish of HALFORD in Warwickshire, with some adjacent villages, are amongst the exceptions to the general misery of the village-poor; as they have, by the contribution of the inhabitants, been supplied with bread at the rate of six pounds for a shilling, and fuel at prime cost, viz. one shilling per hundred. The leasing season, it may be noticed, has this year been of most timely succour to the poor, as the abundance of their gleanings have added importantly to their autumnal stores; but here again they are disappointed by the rapacity of the miller, who, in addition to an enormous toll, which he never fails to take, exchanges their sound corn for musty and unwholesome meal. And thus every advantage is seized by one or other of the Poor Man's enemies—which calls aloud upon the defence and friendship of the legislature, and in no instance more flagrantly than in regulating the weights and measures; many of which, in the districts where they have been examined, have been found extremely deficient, and confiscated accordingly.

* In a late question betwixt a landlord and tenant, brought before Sir Nash Grose and a special Jury, a farmer employed 3000 feet of oak and elm plank, which had been assigned to him to effect the necessary repairs, to the absurd purpose of making a tall awkward-looking garden fence; and for the sake of this high pallisado, instead of performing the covenant of his lease, the farm was suffered to drop into decay, and as the learned Judge observed, had been "*tearing out the hearts-blood of the land.*" He might have added, *the hearts-blood also of the landlord*; for many freaks equally preposterous in the tenants now a days, have led them likewise to tear out *the hearts-blood of the Poor*. The tables are completely turned since the time in which Goldsmith wrote his admirable Poem, wherein he patriotically laments, that "*the landlord's proud mansion, spurn'd the cottage from the plain.*" In the present invasion of things, the overgrown tenant becomes the leviathan, and gorges both the *hells* and the *huts*. With regard to the latter, great farmers, it has been already stated, are not willing to admit them close to their farms; so the labourers are sent in all kinds of weather, after they have done a hard day's work, into neighbouring, or even distant villages, instead of repairing to some sheltered spot near the farm where the labour lies. This would be true policy in the farmer, and comfort to his assistants.

† The farmers in different parts of the country, at this moment assert, that as the wheat-harvest has now been got in without wet, they can keep and *store it up*; but had it been in any measure damaged by the rains, they *must* have brought it to market: so that the present abundance is likely to make against the comforts of the poor, rather than to promote them. Indeed, shameless farmers, have had the effrontery to menace this publicly.

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The various manufacturing towns which the Author of the Poem attentively examined, are so replete with filth, poverty, and disease, in the lanes, alleys, lofts and cellars, where the weaving-trades are carried on; their places of labour so close, their beds so ragged in furniture, and so loaded with promiscuous bodies, that one miserable wretch becomes the nuisance of another. At Birmingham, Tewkesbury, and Coventry, there are no words to paint duly their squalid and starving situation, which at length broke out in a poverty-flux produced by an imprudent use of cheap fruits, such as were thrown within their reach by the abundant supply of the season, after a course of hard living on common vegetables; as animal food had long been yielded in despair. The state of the Coventry poor is pitiable beyond all power of communicating an idea of it; yet since the decay of the ribbon-trade, it has been treble taxed in the poors-rate. In Liverpool the malady was yet more extensive. Manchester did not altogether escape the contagion; and had not a fresh store of the new nourishing roots come to their timely relief, as a substitute for bread, the better-fed ranks of society would have had *their* share of the mortality, notwithstanding their *generous living*, as they call it—and the wide-spreading pestilence might have made even the *Remnants of the Land* still more scanty.

F I N I S.

*From the Office of
W. Dyde, Tewkesbury.*

ERRATA.



Page.	Line.	Read.
14	12	<i>Peasants</i> instead of "Peasant"
31	7	<i>Your</i> instead of "thy"
34	13	<i>Retain</i> instead of "sustain"
41	10	<i>They scent</i> instead of "and scent"
44	6	<i>Vie</i> instead of "rise"
47	9	' <i>Tis vulgar</i> instead of "it is vulgar"
56	14	After <i>paper</i> add "a comma".